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CHINA

Its History Arts and Literature

BY

CAPTAIN F. BRINKLEY

ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME X

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CHINA

ITS HISTORY ARTS AND LITERATURE

Chapter I

THE FEATURES OF THE COUNTRY

NOTHING surprises the student of Chinese history and the Chinese people more than the incomplete and uncertain character of available information. The subject is profoundly interesting. No other nation with which the world is acquainted has been so consistently true to itself; no other nation has preserved its type so unaltered; no other nation has developed a civilisation so completely independent of extraneous influences; no other nation has elaborated its own ideals in such absolute segregation from alien thought; no other nation has preserved the long stream of its literature so entirely free from foreign affluents; no other nation has ever reached a moral and national elevation comparatively so high above the heads of contemporary States. About a land thus

abounding in titles to consideration it should be possible to speak with accuracy and assurance. But, on the contrary, though the literature inspired by the subject would furnish a library, its language is often speculative and its statements do not pretend to be final. Even the origin of the name "China" is conjectural. It is supposed to have been derived from the fact that at the time when Western people began to make their way overland to that part of the Orient, their first place of arrival was the kingdom of Tsin, or Chin, by which name they consequently came to call the whole country. In later days the Tsin rulers rose from the position of feudal princes to the sovereignty of the entire Empire, so that the correctness of the appellation "Tsina" or "China" received confirmation in the eyes of foreigners. But the Chinese themselves never used any such term. They originally called their country by one of three names — *Tien-hia* (under the heavens), *Sz-hai* (within the four seas), or *Chung-kwoh* (middle country). All these designations have been cited as evidence of the conceit of their authors. The charge is scarcely just. *Sz-hai* is evidently a geographical derivation; the same term (*Shi-kai*) was commonly applied by the Japanese to their island Empire, though they can never have laboured under any false impression as to its magnitude and relative importance. *Chung-kwoh*, which came into use in the twelfth century before Christ, was originally employed to

designate the imperial province of Honan on account of its central situation, and if *Tien-hia* savours of vanity, it had the excuse of being applied to the most extensive Empire ever governed by one sovereign. On the other hand, terms are not wanting that suggest the high esteem in which the Chinese have always held themselves. *Tien-chan* is such a term and *Chung-hwa-kwoh* is another. The people of China, for whom the doctrine of the divine right of kings possessed more practical significance than it had for Occidental nations, spoke of their Sovereign as *Tien-tsz*, or "son of heaven," and his dominions as *Tien-chan*, or (the land ruled by) the "heavenly dynasty." This latter name became "Celestial Kingdom" in the vocabulary of Europeans and Americans, who supplemented it by calling the Chinese people "Celestials," a term invented in the Occident, having no equivalent in the Chinese language, and being moreover entirely inconsistent with the spirit of the Chinese polity. As for *Chung-hwa-kwoh* (middle flowery kingdom) and *Hwa-yen* (flowery language), they are frank indications of the fact that the Chinese considered their land the most civilised and their language and literature the most refined in the world; an estimate which had at least the merit of being absolutely true at the time when it was made. One other form of appellation may be mentioned, namely, that derived from the name of the reigning dynasty. It is thus that the people often call

themselves "Sons of *Han*" (*Han-tsz*), "men of *Tang*" (*Tang-jin*), or "people of the Great Pure Dynasty" (the *Ta-tsing*, now reigning), and more rarely designate the kingdom the "flowery *Hia*" (*Hwa-hia*). Perhaps the commonest term of all is *Li-min*, or "black-haired people." To the earnest student of China and the Chinese it seems not inappropriate that the country and its inhabitants should have more than an ordinary allowance of appellations, and that some of them should reflect the original might and culture of so remarkable a nation.

There is uncertainty also about the area and population; not merely because these have varied within large limits from age to age, but also because neither Chinese geodesy nor Chinese statistology is altogether trustworthy. The Empire proper consists of eighteen provinces, bounded on the east and south by the ocean, on the north by the vast desert of Gobi, and on the west by the mountains of Thibet and India. The area of these eighteen provinces — called by the Chinese *Shih-pah-sung* (eighteen provinces) or *Chung-kwoh* (middle country) — has been variously estimated at from one and one fourth to two millions of square miles, and the figure now regarded with most confidence is 1,336,841. For purposes of comparison China proper has been described as seven times the size of France, fifteen times that of the United Kingdom, and one-half that of Europe. The population which Chinese annals

put at 150 millions in 1743 is now believed by the best authorities to be over 400 millions.

These eighteen provinces have always been regarded as China proper. But the Empire includes also Manchuria, and has for colonial possessions Thibet, Mongolia, and Ili, in which last are included Eastern Turkestan and Sungaria (or Jungaria). If perplexity exists as to the exact area of the eighteen provinces and the number of their inhabitants, it will easily be understood that still vaguer approximations are alone possible in the case of the remote and little visited regions of Manchuria (known as the "Three Eastern Provinces") and the above colonial territories. Manchuria is believed to cover 364,000 square miles approximately, and to have a population of about thirteen millions, while the corresponding figures for the colonies are:

	Area.	Population.
Mongolia . .	1,288,000 square miles	2 millions
Ili	579,750 " "	1¼ millions
Thibet . . .	650,000 " "	6 millions

Taking these figures for superficies, and assuming the area of the eighteen provinces to be one and one third million square miles, which is probably a close approximation, it would follow that the total expanse of the Chinese Empire is about four and one fourth million square miles and that its population approximates to 450 millions. Thus it stands third on the territorial schedule of the world's states, Russia being first and Great

Britain second, while in point of population it easily heads the list.

It must appear singular to some readers, that after so many years of tolerably close intercourse between China and Western countries there should still be so much uncertainty about her population. But strangers are obviously incompetent to form any trustworthy estimate in the case of an empire so vast and so little accessible, while the Chinese themselves have never taken a census for its own sake. Their unique object in conducting such investigations has always been to determine the number of taxable units, and in view of that purpose the people, on their side, have naturally shown a disposition to evade enumeration. The history of the Empire records that in the ninth century before Christ, the population of China proper aggregated about twenty-two millions, and that the figure at the beginning of the Christian era was eighty millions. Thereafter great variations appear in the returns; variations which, though partially attributable to changes in the areas affected, and partially to the inclusion at one time of elements excluded at another, are still so marked as to be bewildering. Thus the eighty millions of the days of Christ fall to twenty-three millions three centuries subsequently; rise to forty-six millions after the lapse of a similar period; become 100 millions at the beginning of the twelfth century; fall again to fifty-nine millions at the end of the

thirteenth; dwindle to twenty-nine millions in 1711; leap to 108 millions forty-two years later, and thenceforth grow steadily until 362 millions is reached in 1812 — a figure regarded as specially trustworthy — and 420 millions at the present time. These figures have been subjected to much scrutiny by Occidental writers, many of whom have been disposed to place a minimum of faith in Chinese methods of enumeration. On the other hand, it has been pointed out with much apparent justice that there are no valid reasons to query the truth of census returns in a country where all other kinds of statistics show considerable accuracy; and, further, that the information collected during recent years by the Imperial Customs officials under the direction of Western experts, indicates a figure tallying closely with the Chinese record for the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Ming rulers, to the end of the fourteenth century, counted the population of the eighteen provinces at sixty millions, and when, in the year 1735, the Manchu sovereign, Chien-lung, demanded a return, not of "taxable units which never increase, nor of free units which pay no revenue, but of human beings," the population was declared by his officials to be 143 millions. That would be quite consistent with 420 millions at the close of the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly famines and wars sometimes caused acute fluctuations in the number of the people. It has been estimated by good authori-

ties that the Taeping rebellion (1850–64), which was probably not more destructive of human life than some of the convulsions accompanying previous changes of dynasty, caused the population to decline by two-fifths, which would mean that during that period of fourteen years the death rate was nearly doubled throughout the moiety of the Empire affected by the outbreak. Again at the close of the thirteenth century, the Mongol invasion was attended with such slaughter that the great province of Szchuan emerged from the carnage with less than a million inhabitants, whereas it has now nearly eighty millions; and during the rebellions that preluded the fall of the Ming dynasty in the seventeenth century, the depopulation of certain parts of the Empire was on a scale which has been compared to the results of the Great Plague in England.

It appears from the above figures that the average population of the eighteen provinces is now 314 per square mile, the most thickly populated part being the nine eastern provinces, for which the ratio is 450 per square mile, and the most thinly populated the nine southern and western with a corresponding figure of 237. Great Britain is the only European country where the average (289 to the square mile) is not greatly less than that of the eighteen provinces, and Bengal alone, with 440 to the square mile, approaches the figure for the nine eastern provinces.

Statistics recently collected indicate that the area of cultivated land in China is 400 million acres, approximately, which figure bears about the same ratio to the waste land as is the case in England; and inasmuch as the Chinese do not devote any land to purposes of pasture, but employ every available spot for the production of bread-stuffs, means of subsistence for a vast population are evidently furnished by such a large expanse of cultivated fields. Yet the severity of the struggle for existence forces itself upon the attention of every observer, and would certainly be much accentuated did the people adopt meat diet. At present the staple articles of food are rice, millet, and sweet potatoes — the addition of this last in recent years having immensely augmented the nation's resources. These bread-stuffs are supplemented by vegetables of all kinds, obtained from the land and from the sea, by vast quantities of fish, by pork, by poultry, by ducks, by geese, and by game abundantly found in some districts. There is no pasture land. Oxen, horses, mules, and donkeys, used almost entirely for purposes of agriculture and transport, are fed upon grain, straw, vegetables, or grass cut from the hills. Further, unutilised refuse is reduced to a minimum by the operation of a custom, possessing almost the force of law, that every family must keep one or more pigs. In the cities the art of economising space has been fully developed: comparatively few large pleasure-

grounds are to be seen, in which respect China offers a marked contrast to the neighbouring Empire of Japan. Moreover, profound as is the reverential love of the Chinese for the spirits of deceased relatives, cemeteries are not allowed to encroach unduly upon arable areas. The space allotted for graves is probably as extensive as that assigned for the purpose in any country, but it is selected on economical principles, — that is to say, in spots uninviting for culture, — and when, as is not uncommon, the tomb or burial mound stands in the ancestral field, crops are grown up to its very enclosure.[1] Further, in many parts of the Empire the land produces two crops annually, and in the loess region of the northwest a three-fold return is looked for by the farmer. Estimates believed to be conservative put the districts that give a double yield at twenty-five per cent of the total arable land; and on that hypothesis the crop-producing area would be some five hundred million acres, or nearly one and one fourth acres per head of population.[2] Considering that in the neighbouring Empire of Japan, where the manner of life is very similar, the ratio does not exceed one-half of an acre per head, it is evident that if the above estimates be correct, China could support a much greater population than she has at present. Nevertheless there exists a widely prevalent idea that the country's food-giving resources are taxed to the utmost, and

[1] See Appendix, note 1.

[2] See Appendix, note 2.

when the inducements to multiply are considered as well as the untiring industry of the people and the obviously severe struggle for existence in which numbers of them are compelled to engage, the accuracy of the figures upon which the above calculations are based would not be credible if the distribution of wealth and the rewards of industry were regulated by the laws prevailing in Western countries. Summarising the exceptional incentives to increase of population, there are found, first, the religious tenet that the spirits of the dead cannot obtain peace unless worship is performed at their tombs by male descendants; secondly, the ethical obligation of continuing the family;[1] thirdly, the social stigma which attaches to an unwedded marriageable girl; and fourthly, the provision of law which requires that husbands shall be furnished for females sold into service. The influence of these factors, acting through centuries, is partially mitigated by the operation of stupendous natural calamities to cope with which no adequate organisation exists, so that hundreds of thousands of lives are lost without exciting any national emotion, and by periodical *émeutes* which claim a scarcely smaller tale of victims. But the net result is certainly a rapid growth of population, and no one can travel through China without receiving an impression that the people are so numerous as almost to overtax the means of subsistence, and that an

[1] See Appendix, note 3.

exceptionally large number live on the very brink of indigence.

Here it should be noted that to every impartial student of China's manners and customs the scepticism of foreigners as to the correctness of her statistics and their preference for their own rough estimates seem merely a phase of Occidental prejudice. The Chinese obtain their records of population by the aid of a registration law which requires that all the names of a house's inmates shall be inscribed on a board kept hanging in a conspicuous place. Such a system is not guaranteed against mistakes, but it deserves more credence than foreign critics are generally disposed to accord to it, and since its errors, if any, would evidently be on the side of omissions, the figures derived from it cannot be regarded as exaggerations.

The confines of China, if in that term be included Manchuria, Mongolia, Ili, and Thibet, are well defined by nature. Along the whole length of its northern frontier the Empire is conterminous with Asiatic Russia, but the two are separated by a great range of mountains which, under various local appellations, the best known being the Altai, stretch in a generally east-and-west direction through a distance of some twenty-five hundred miles, when, turning southward, they join the Tien-shan (celestial mountains), the latter passing into the Belurtag, which with the Himalayas form the western barriers of the Empire. At three points only do these natural barriers lose

their definite character. These points are the southwest of Yunnan Province, where access to Chinese territory from Annam, Siam, and Burmah is comparatively easy; the northwestern border between Ili and the Kirghis steppe, and the northeastern, or Trans-Amur, district. It is worthy of note that the tide of Western aggression threatens to roll into China from these three points; Russia being the motive force in the northeast and the northwest, France and England in the southwest. Of course the whole of the eastern sea-board is a line of general invasion.

Another natural barrier which helps to segregate China on the north is the vast Desert of Gobi, having a length of 2,200 miles and varying in width from 150 to 600 miles. Over this celebrated waste, which covers nearly a million square miles, insufferable heat broods in summer and almost unendurable cold prevails in winter, and the danger of crossing the vast expanse is accentuated by shifting sand hills. It is in the western region of this desert and among the peaks of the Kwanlun mountains that the deities and demons of Taoism and Buddhism are supposed to exercise their mystic sway. In the western section of the Gobi Desert there lies, along the southern slopes of the Celestial Mountains, a strip of arable land from fifty to eighty miles wide, watered by the Tarim River and its branches. This strip is tolerably fertile, and within it lie all the Mohammedan cities and forts of the *Nan Lu*, which are under

the control of the Colonial Department in Peking, the Begs being kept quiet by regular payments of salaries. The road crossing the eastern section of the Desert is 660 miles between Urga and Kalgan, and there are forty-seven posts along it. During certain seasons of the year this route is sufficiently watered to be clothed with grass, and the crow, the lark, and the sand-grouse abound, but the vegetation is stunted and the water in the small streams and lakes is brackish. "The whole of Gobi is regarded by Pumpelly as having formed a portion of a great ocean, which in comparatively recent geological times extended south to the Caspian and Black Seas and between the Ural and Inner Hing-an Mountains, and was drained off by an upheaval whose traces and effects can be detected in many parts." Clouds of sand and dust carried by the wind from these extensive deserts are supposed to have raised the plains of northwestern China several hundreds of feet in the lapse of ages.

China proper — that is to say, the area comprising the eighteen provinces — has three great rivers whose valleys may be said to form the three natural divisions of the Empire, if by valley be understood drainage basin. All the streams in the northern section are affluents of the Yellow River (Hwang-ho), which carries their waters into the Gulf of Pechili. All the streams of the central section similarly fall into the Yangtse, and are borne by it to the Eastern Sea; and a majority of the streams

of the southern section flow into the Pearl River (Chu-kiang) and travel with it to the China Sea. These divisions are very unequal in size, the Yangtse being about as extensive as the other two combined: which comparison, however, must be regarded as only an approximation, no accurate survey having yet been made. The usual calculation is that in the Yangtse Valley are comprised seven provinces — Szchuan, Yunnan, Hupeh, Hunan, Anhwei, Kiangsi, and Kiangsu — which would make the area 607,000 square miles and the population 224 millions, leaving 729,841 square miles and 196 millions of population to the valleys of the Yellow River and the Pearl River combined.

From the point — the "Starry Sea" (*Sing-suh-hai*), so called because of the glittering lakes that stud it — where the Yellow River rises near the southern slopes of the Celestial Mountains, to the point where it enters the Gulf of Pechili, the distance as the crow flies is some 1,300 miles, but the sinuosities of the river double the journey it makes from source to sea. During the first 1,100 miles of its travel from the hills the translucidity of its deep waters earns for it the title of "Black River;" but when it enters the province of Shansi — in other words, when it enters China proper, of which it has hitherto helped to form the northern boundary — its stream quickly becomes impregnated with the yellow soil (loess) of that singular region, and it thenceforth receives its familiar

name. Every one that has read anything about China is acquainted with the Yellow River, — "China's Sorrow," as it has been well termed, — for, owing to the unscientific creation of restraining dykes along its lower reaches, the natural levels have been disturbed, and not only has the river been constrained to excavate for itself new channels, entering the sea now on the south, now on the north, of the promontory of Shantung, but also its waters frequently burst out and distribute themselves over vast areas of country, carrying devastation and destruction far and wide. The loss of thousands of lives and millions of dollars may be attributed, every year, directly or indirectly, to floods caused by this most mischievous river. It long ago escaped the control of a nation which nevertheless produced engineers capable of building the Great Wall and planning the Grand Canal. Only the upper reaches of the Yellow River are sufficiently navigable to be useful for trading purposes. It there offers a much employed route for salt junks and for boats that carry iron and other metals from the mines of Shansi. But so soon as it enters the lowlands (near Honan city) it ceases to be serviceable for navigation, and becomes mainly remarkable for the devastation its periodical floods produce, and for the great sums of money fruitlessly squandered by the Chinese Government every year on attempts to control its overflow.

The Yangtse is a greater river than the Hwang-ho, having a length of some 1,900 miles from

A BIT OF RIVER LIFE.

A BIT OF RIVER LIFE.

source to mouth as the crow flies, and an actual length of probably 3,000 miles. It is one of the most interesting features in China, for not only is it the main, if not the only, means of communication between the east and the west of the great Empire, but also the "Valley" to which it gives its name — that is to say, the vast area of over six hundred thousand square miles watered by itself and its affluents — constitutes the very heart of the Middle Kingdom and attracts the ambitious eyes of more than one Occidental Power. The city of Chung-king, which stands upon the Yangtse 1,800 miles from its mouth, has been called the "commercial metropolis of Western China," just as Shanghai, situated on an affluent of the same river at a comparatively short distance from the sea, is called the "metropolis of the coast." Of the long stretch of river between these two cities the first thousand miles are easily traversed by steamers in six or seven days, but the remaining four hundred miles, though navigable by specially constructed vessels, offer serious difficulties owing to rapids of a dangerous character. The term "Yangtse" is not everywhere applied to the river. It has various names. Throughout the first 1,300 miles of its course from the Tanglu and Kwanlun mountains it is called the River of the Golden Sands (Kinsha-kiang). Then, after receiving an important affluent, the Yalung, which has hitherto been running nearly parallel to it for six hundred miles in a valley

further east, it takes the name of Great River (Ta-kiang), which at Wuchang in Hupeh is changed to Long River (Chang-kiang) and finally at Nanking to Willow River (Yangtse-kiang),[1] a term derived from the willows planted at the entrances and exits of the towns along its banks. The last stretch of two hundred miles from Nanking to the river's two mouths at Tsung-ming Island is navigable by ocean-going ships, and European engineers have declared that by digging a canal round the gorges and rapids between Ichang and Kweichow steamers would be able to ascend to a total distance of two thousand miles from the sea. Compared with the Yellow River, the Yangtse is a quiet stream, yet it is sometimes responsible for inundations on a vast scale; for not only has it been known to rise two hundred feet above its normal level, as in 1870, when whole cities were swept away by its raging flood, but also, like the Yellow River, its bed, owing to injudiciously planned dykes, has been gradually raised above the level of the country through which it flows, and the destruction or decay of these embankments often converts wide districts into inland seas. The Yangtse has inspired much literature and occupied the attention of many scientific observers. These have proved that in the last thousand miles of its course the river has a fall of only 163 feet; that the sediment deposited at the mouth is sufficient to

[1] See Appendix, note 4.

create every year an island one mile square and fifty fathoms deep, and that the coast line is thus rapidly gaining on the ocean, so that Shanghai may soon become an inland city unapproachable by tidal waters, a result which the inhabitants are now strenuously endeavouring to avert. From Ichang to the source of the great river some of the grandest scenery in the world is to be witnessed, the waters having effected passages for themselves through the mountains by cutting gorges sometimes twelve or thirteen hundred feet deep and in one instance twenty-five hundred, where the ruggedness of colossal cliffs and vast piles of rock contrasts with soft woods and a dazzling profusion of flowers. Mr. A. Little, in "Through the Yangtse Gorges," writes: "A few of the most common flowers to be met within a day's walk up any of the glens are camellia, rose, larkspur, Chinese daisy, begonia, sunflower, virgin lily, bignonia, wistaria, lavender, gardenia, honeysuckle, yellow jasmine, orange lily, besides many others equally beautiful which have no common English names. The cottage gardens abound with pomegranates, loquats, peaches, plums, orange and other fruit trees. On the higher slopes above the precipices we find glorious woods of walnut and chestnut trees, while the useful tallow tree, with its beautiful tinted foliage and exuberant scented blossom, grows everywhere." The same writer mentions thirteen kinds of fruit trees and several species of ever-

greens found in these regions, and speaking of insect life in the upper reaches of the great river, tells of "gorgeous butterflies, fireflies the most brilliant I have ever seen, small birds innumerable (notwithstanding the numerous kites and eagles), the commonest of which are the golden oriole, the bluejay, and the ubiquitous swallow. Two kinds of little rocklets with red tails, one of them with a white top-knot, hop about the rocks by the water's edge. Back in the mountains are the golden, silvern, and Reeves' pheasants . . . Thrushes and minas are also common, and the cormorant, which, as well as the tame otter, is everywhere employed in fishing." These remarks apply to the upper Yangtse; that is to say, the two thousand miles of the river above Ichang. Through the last thousand miles of its course the stream runs over beds of soft alluvium, its current comparatively slow except in the season of summer flood, its limits marked by huge embankments, its bed often ten and fifteen feet above the level of the surrounding country, and its scenery uninteresting. Nothing could illustrate more vividly the defective means of communication in China than the fact that the Yangtse constitutes the only highroad from the east to the great province of Szchuan with an area of 167,000 square miles and a population of nearly eighty million souls. For the Yangtse from Ichang to Chungking is a succession of rapids and rocky gorges. No less than a thousand of such obstructions, all

difficult of passage and perilous, are enumerated in the "Yangtse Pilot," so that junks and boats struggling up against the strong current have to be dragged by bands of trackers toiling with bodies bent almost to the ground and making their way over cliff paths such as no ordinary pedestrian could traverse with safety. Immense waste of labor and of time, to say nothing of cost and risk of loss, is entailed in the transport of goods by such a route, yet there is practically no other,[1] and the Chinese would apparently have remained content to suffer under these crippling conditions for all time had not foreign enterprise placed upon the river in 1899 small steamers specially built which will probably revolutionise the traffic in a few years.

The Pearl River (Chu-kiang), with its three branches, the East, the North, and the West rivers, constitutes the southern unit of the great water system of China. This, generally spoken of as the "West River" (Si-kiang), has its source in the south of Yunnan, whence, after a course of some nine hundred miles in a generally easterly direction, it enters the sea at Canton, after draining an area of about 130,000 square miles. Apart from its association with the celebrated city of Canton, which alone would suffice to make the river famous, the question of getting its waters opened to foreign navigation occupied diplomatic and commercial attention for many years, and was

[1] See Appendix, note 5.

at length solved at the close of the nineteenth century, access being then given to the towns of Nanning, Sin-chou and, above all, Wu-chou, which, lying at the borders of the provinces Kwan-tung and Kwan-si, is the chief tradal emporium of all the Si-kiang's branches and tributaries.

As the course of China's three great rivers is from west to east, broadly speaking, and as their valleys occupy nearly the whole of the eighteen provinces, it may be inferred that China proper constitutes the Pacific slope of the Central Asian plateau. There is, however, a fourth group of rivers in the southwest of the Empire, which run in a southeasterly or due southerly direction, and have interest as forming the routes of communication between that part of China and the countries on the south, namely, Burmah, Siam, and Tonquin. These rivers are the Salween, the Meikong, and the Sonka (Red River). The Salween and the Meikong, rising in the Thibetan mountains, run in more or less parallel courses, the former into Burmah, the latter into Siam, and the Red River, a comparatively small body of water, flows from Yunnan into the Gulf of Tonquin, forming the chief tradal route between southern China and France's recently acquired possessions in Annam. If the direction of these rivers be considered, it will be understood that though the main portion of the eighteen provinces slopes eastward towards the Pacific Ocean, the

extreme western part slopes southward from the tableland of Thibet.

There are, of course, many minor streams not without importance locally and historically, but reference to them can be made more intelligibly in connection with the districts to which they belong.

China proper has not many lakes in proportion to its immense area. The principal Tung-ting lake is Honan, a sheet of water some 220 miles in circumference under normal circumstances but swelled to very much larger dimensions when its northern shores are invaded by floods from the Yangtse. This lake is supposed to be a favourite abode of many of the spirits of Taoism, and the scenes of innumerable legends are laid on its shores or in its waters. There are evidences that the lake once formed part of an inland sea about two hundred miles long and eighty miles broad, through the middle of which the Yangtse flowed. Gradually this wide expanse of water was filled with silt carried down by the big river and its tributaries, until now only a small portion of its bed is under water. The silting-up process continues; for two rivers of considerable magnitude, the Yuen and the Siang, flow into the lake on the south, and before their waters reach the point of exit at Yochow on the northeast shore, whence they pass into the Yangtse, much of the silt they carry has been deposited, so that the lake grows steadily shallower.

A much more picturesque and in some respects more important sheet of water is the Po-yang Lake, which receives the waters of the Kan River — also flowing into it from the south — and discharges them into the Yangtse at Kiukiang, some 320 miles below the point where the Tung-ting Lake has its exit. About ninety miles long and twenty broad, this sheet of water is studded with beautiful islets thickly peopled, and is celebrated as the chief scene of keramic manufacture in China. Jao-chou, the site of the imperial porcelain factories, lies at the eastern extremity of the lake. There, ever since the tenth century, have been produced the incomparable porcelains of China, wares which, in their own class, have never been approached by the works of any other country.

An interesting series of lakes is that used by the builders of the Grand Canal. This remarkable work, called by the Chinese *Chah-ho* (river of flood-gates) or *Yun-ho* (transit river), is generally believed to have been devised by an engineer in the service of Kublai Khan, for the purpose of connecting Peking — the "Cambaluc" of Marco Polo — with Hang-chou, the capital of China under the Sung dynasty which Kublai's ancestor had overthrown. But the fact is that the idea of constructing a water-way between the two great rivers — the Yellow and the Yangtse — was conceived and carried out under the Han dynasty in the second century before Christ, and the

cutting made for that purpose was repaired and kept open by succeeding dynasties until the tenth century, when the Sung emperors, having established their metropolis at Hang-chou, excavated a water-way northward from that city to Chinkiang on the Yangtse, thus establishing connection with the Han sovereign's canal which enters the Yangtse at a point opposite to Chinkiang on the northern bank of the river. What the Mongol ruler, Kublai, did in the thirteenth century was to add the last section to the work, namely, the section from Peking to the Yellow River, the engineer being Kwoh Chou-king, reported to have been the best mathematician ever produced by China. It will thus be seen that the canal was constructed in three parts, the first and second at an interval of nearly twelve hundred years, the second and the third at an interval of about three hundred. Clever advantage was taken of all natural aids *en route*, so that the canal crosses no less than six lakes between Hang-chou and the Yellow River, and two streams are led into it between the latter and the Peiho, which river carries it through a distance of eighty miles to Tung-chou, a town fourteen miles from Peking. The total length of the canal is about 650 miles. In some cases its bed is raised to a height of twenty feet above towns lying along its course; in others it descends to a depth of seventy feet below the adjacent plane. At the time of its construction it ranked immeasurably above any

cognate engineering work in the world, but its chief uses have now virtually disappeared, much of the tribute rice it was originally designed to convey to the metropolis being carried to-day far more cheaply and expeditiously by steamers taking the sea route.

It is notable that several European observers in former years endeavoured to depreciate the Grand Canal as a signal monument of skilled industry, their contention being that in every part of its course it passes through alluvial soil easily excavated; that in almost every district traversed it is aided by tributary rivers or lakes; that the sluices for preserving the levels are of rude construction, being simply buttresses of stone with grooves into which thick plants are fitted; and that nowhere is a mountain tunnelled or a viaduct formed. These criticisms, far from fulfilling their purpose, bear eloquent testimony to the engineering ability of the planners of the canal. It is precisely because they accomplished their object with a minimum of difficulty that they deserve the highest praise.

Marked differences of opinion have been recorded by travellers with reference to highroads in China, some describing them as execrable while others praise them warmly. The truth is that the roads are either mere tracks or elaborately paved causeways, and that although much labour and expense were occasionally lavished on their creation at the outset, no continuous system

of repair was subsequently pursued. Thus, the road from Tientsin to Peking, each an immense city, is nothing more than a broad path sometimes covered with mud to a depth of three feet and sometimes abounding in ruts and holes of almost incredible dimensions, whereas the main route in Szchuan Province is paved with slabs of stone five feet wide, which is the entire width of the fair-way, and is carried over the mountains that encircle the Province by a series of steps hewn in the rocks barely spacious enough for one sedan-chair to pass. On the other hand, a stone causeway of noble dimensions leads from Peking to Tung-chou, and in Shantung the roads sometimes present the aspect of avenues. Everywhere, however, the dominant feature is neglect. On the causeways the stone slabs are wanting in some spots, and in others have been sunk or tilted so that the surface of the road suggests petrified billows. In the streets of Peking holes have been allowed to grow to the dimensions of military shelter pits, and when these are filled with mud — a common occurrence — instances are on record of draught-mules stumbling into them and being drowned. At Shasi on the Yangtse River there is a stone embankment in three tiers with a fine bund on the top, a work of the days of China's greatness; but at present the arch-crossed flights of stone steps that lead up the embankment at intervals are so deeply covered with mud that the citizens find it safer to use paths climbing

over dirt-heaps which have been formed by refuse thrown from the town over the edge of the stone enbankment. In the loess regions of Shansi Province even such restorations as would have compensated the action of the wind have been neglected, so that the surface, pulverised by traffic, having been gradually blown away, the roads have ultimately been converted into immense ruts running at a depth of from fifteen to twenty feet below the level of the surrounding country. It has been justly said of some of the highways of China that, as examples of engineering skill and magnificent labour, they probably equalled, when new, the best efforts of the Romans in the same line. To believe that dictum is less difficult than to conceive any racial affinity between the men that planned and executed these fine works and the men that have suffered them to fall into ruin and decay. The Grand Canal, in itself a triumph of engineering skill and imperial enterprise, has shared the fate of the roads: both have become well nigh useless through neglect. It is not that the Chinaman's appreciation of comfortable travel and economical traffic is naturally defective, though the habit of suffering may have blunted it. The more credible explanation is that, owing to the division of society into family groups each entirely absorbed in its own welfare, public spirit has almost ceased to be operative, and combined effort for such an object as road-repairing is out of the question. There is in Peking a Board of

Public Works nominally charged with the duty of attending to such matters, and admirably organised for the purpose. But no practical evidences of the Board's existence are apparent in the provinces. China has had great administrative and great executive conceptions, but her social structure seems unsuited to any continuity of public effort.

In order to suggest a compendious idea of the Chinese Empire it has been spoken of above as consisting of two parts, namely, China proper and her tributary or indirectly governed states on the north and west, the whole forming an area of about 4,250,000 square miles and containing a population of some 450 millions of souls. This conception may be further defined by saying that the eighteen provinces of China proper occupy the southwestern corner of the vast area, and that, while constituting barely one-third of the total superficies, they nevertheless support nine-tenths of the aggregate population. Thus, even if China were stripped of all her outlying portions — Manchuria, Mongolia, Ili, and Thibet — the sources of her wealth and strength would still remain unimpaired, though her magnitude would be reduced by two-thirds. In fact, these outlying portions consist mainly of "poorly watered deserts or plateaux, thinly peopled by races forming majorities over the Chinese settlers."

Considered with regard to wealth and population, the eighteen provinces divide themselves into

eastern and western, those in the eastern section being incomparably richer and more thickly peopled than those in the Western, with the single exception of Szchuan. If the Yellow River continued its due southerly direction from the Great Wall down to the Gulf of Tonquin, instead of turning east at the point where it receives its principal tributary, the Wei, it would divide the Empire into two groups of provinces, twelve on the east and six on the west, the eastern having a total area of three-quarters of a million of square miles, a total population of 304 millions and a total revenue of seventy-eight millions of taels, the western having an area of less than half a million square miles, a population of 117 millions and a revenue of nineteen millions. Thus, while the areas are in the ratio of seven to three, the populations are in the ratio of nine to three and the revenues in the ratio of twelve to three, approximately. For the sake of convenience the table on the following page shows the areas, populations, public revenues and capitals of the eighteen provinces.

With regard to the climate of China the isothermal lines show that the average temperature is below that of any other country in the same latitude. Thus Peking, Vienna, and Dublin are nearly on the same line (50° F.), as are also Shanghai and Marseilles (60° F.), whereas the line (70° F.) passing south of Canton runs eight degrees north of New Orleans. In other words,

while Shanghai and Peking have temperatures corresponding with those of Occidental cities situated nearly on the same parallel, "Canton is the coldest place on the globe in its latitude and

TWELVE EASTERN PROVINCES.

	Area in Sq. Miles.	Population.	Revenue in Taels.	Capital City.
Shansi . .	56,268	11,100,000	4,040,000	Taiyuen.
Chili . . .	58,949	29,400,000	6,360,000	Paoting.
Honan . .	66,913	21,000,000	3,235,000	Kaifung.
Shantung .	53,762	37,400,000	4,530,000	Tsinan.
Hupeh . .	70,450	34,300,000	7,320,000	Wuchang.
Anhwei . .	48,461	35,800,000	4,033,000	Nganking.
Kiangsu . .	44,500	24,600,000	21,450,000	Kiangming.
Hunan . .	74,320	22,000,000	2,765,000	Changsha.
Kiangsi . .	72,176	22,000,000	4,800,000	Nanchang.
Chekiang .	39,150	11,800,000	5,786,000	Hangchou.
Fuhkien . .	53,480	25,000,000	6,035,000	Fuchou.
Kwangtung .	79,456	29,900,000	7,525,000	Canton.

SIX WESTERN PROVINCES.

Kansu . .	125,450	9,800,000	5,946,000	Hsian.
Shensi . .	67,400	8,400,000	2,380,000	Lanchou.
Szechuan .	166,800	79,500,000	6,050,000	Chingtu.
Kweichou .	64,554	4,800,000	1,107,000	Kweiyang.
Yunnan . .	107,969	6,200,000	1,985,000	Yunnan.
Kwangsi . .	78,250	8,730,000	1,730,000	Kweilin.

the only place within the tropics where snow falls near the sea-shore." (Williams.) Occidental visitors to China often denounce the climate as intemperate and unhealthy, but it need scarcely be observed that no general description is properly applicable to such a vast expanse of continent. On the other hand, in many cases a mere statement of mean temperature conveys little idea of the real climate. Thus in Peking

the mean annual temperature is 52.3° F., or fully 9° lower than the figure for Naples. But to infer a climate resembling that of Naples would be erroneous, since in the Chinese metropolis the summer and winter extremes range from 104° F. to zero, while the mean winter range is 12° F. below freezing-point; that is to say, 18° lower than the Paris mean, and 15° lower than the Copenhagen. Yet although the temperature ranges so low in winter, snow never falls in large quantities, and in spite of the great variations of the thermometer the climate is thoroughly healthy for foreigners and natives alike. Dust storms are the most disagreeable feature. Sweeping over the great plateau on which the city stands — a plateau which seems to be growing more and more desiccated and to be losing its trees with increasing rapidity as years go by — the wind raises vast clouds of dust into the air, and millions of tons of soil are thus shifted from place to place. In Shanghai, on the other hand, which is eight and one-half degrees of latitude further south, although the maximum temperature is only 100° F. and the minimum 24° F., climatic diseases are frequent and the region bears a distinctly unhealthy reputation. On the whole, however, the climate of the immense plain stretching along the eastern side of the Empire is healthy except in the immediate neighbourhood of rivers, lakes, or marshes. Thus an European or American settling in Nanking has to expect some

WALL AROUND THE TARTAR CITY IN PEKIN

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months of ague or malignant fever before becoming acclimatised, and natives and foreigners alike suffer severely from a skin disease which rapidly produces blood poisoning. Passing south to Canton, which ought to have a tropical climate, it is found that the temperature in the hottest months ranges from 80° F. to 88°, against 80° to 93° in Shanghai, and the temperature in the coldest months stands at from 50° to 60° against Shanghai's 45° to 60°. Long experience shows that Canton is remarkably healthy. In spite of dense fogs in February and March malaria is almost unknown, and from October to January the climate is found very agreeable by Occidental visitors, the sky being clear and the air invigorating. Macao and Hongkong, lying respectively at the southern and northern entrances of the estuary up which vessels sail for Canton, used to be spoken of as places which, while within a short distance of each other, differed to a marked degree in climate, Macao being particularly healthy and Hongkong notably unhealthy. But the insalubrious character of Hongkong was partly due to causes independent of climate, and these having been remedied by planting, draining, and providing an ample supply of pure water, the colony is now a pleasant place of sojourn for Occidentals.

According to the Chinese view, Yunnan, Kwangsi, and Kwangtung are the most unhealthy provinces in the whole eighteen, and are conse-

quently chosen as places of banishment. The justice of this view is attested by the comparatively scant population of Kwangsi and Yunnan — 112 and 60 to the square mile, respectively — but Kwangtung with its thirty millions of inhabitants — 376 to the square mile — scarcely belongs to the same category.

It will be observed by looking at a map of China that there lies along the whole coast from south to north a chain of islands, the nearest link being Formosa, between which and the province of Fuhkien the distance is only some twenty miles. The well-known "Black Current" (*Kuro-shiwo*) being on the outside of these islands, they serve as a barrier against its warm waters, and in that fact is to be found a reason for the cold along the Chinese coast as compared with the shores of the Atlantic, a difference corresponding to nearly eight degrees of latitude. To the same cause may also be attributed the comparatively scant rainfall in the maritime provinces of China, the evaporation from the cold water being proportionately small. Thus in Hongkong, one of the chain of islands, the annual mean rainfall for twenty-one years was over eighty-six inches — as much as thirty inches sometimes falls in twenty-four hours, and in 1901 the total for the twelve months was 117 inches, — whereas at Canton the average is twenty inches, in Shanghai it does not exceed forty inches, and in the province of Chili it appears to be only sixteen inches. Further

west, as higher levels are approached, the precipitation becomes larger.

An important feature of Chinese meteorology is the "typhoon," or revolving storm. This term has been generally regarded as a corruption of the Chinese word *ta-fong*, or great wind, but the best sinologues derive it from the Formosan local term for a cyclone, namely, *tai-fong*. This destructive storm sweeps up the coast at intervals between the months of July and October, being most liable to occur about the autumnal equinox in September. It has its birthplace generally in the neighbourhood of Hainan Island or the Philippines, whence it advances northward, revolving on its own axis as it travels. Its track is narrow; the general direction of motion is from south to north in a more or less devious course; its approach is signalled by a rapidly falling barometer and by light airs, which, though blowing from the north, stifle rather than refresh; it is accompanied by deluges of rain; at the centre there is an area of calm, and the identity of the phenomenon is established by the fact that in passing any place the final and initial directions of the wind are found to be exactly opposite. Happily these tremendous gales usually expend their force at sea, where the laws of their behaviour are now so well understood that careful navigators usually elude them altogether or manœuvre so as not to encounter their least force. On the rare occasions of their inland travel the destruction wrought

by them is tremendous, houses being overthrown, trees torn up by the roots, crops destroyed, and large areas inundated. It is recorded that in August, 1862, as many as thirty thousand people were killed by a typhoon in Canton, Hongkong, and their vicinity, and that in September, 1874, the same regions were the scene of a similarly wholesale calamity.

Chapter II

ADMINISTRATION

THE Empire is divided into various administrative units, of which the lowest is the *hien*. It is difficult to find a satisfactory English equivalent for the term *hien*. "Prefecture," "canton," and "department" have all been suggested, but none is strictly applicable. The *hien* is about equal to an English county in area, and, on the whole, "county" is perhaps the most intelligible translation. Each province is divided into a number of *hien*, varying from thirty-four to a hundred and forty, and the *hien* may be roughly described as a walled city with the region surrounding it, an area of from five hundred to one thousand square miles. Two or more *hien* are grouped under a *fu*, or first-class town, so that there are from five to ten *fu* in a province. The *fu* has no independent local existence; it is, in fact, nothing more than the chief of the *hien* that are under it. A still larger administrative area than the *fu* is the *tao*, or circuit. Two or more *fu*, or one *fu* and several *hien* (or *chou*)[1] form a *tao*.[2] The *hien*, according to the

[1] See Appendix, note 6.

[2] See Appendix, note 7.

latest and best commentators, "is the true official unit of Chinese corporate life," every Chinaman being described, before all other attributes, as coming from such a *hien*, and the *hien* magistrate (*Chih-hien*), being in practice the real administrator of all local affairs as well as the judge and tax-collector in his district. The chief official of the *fu* (*Chih-fu*) stands next to the *Chi-hien*, and immediately above both is the chief official of the *tao*, the *Tao-tai*, a term familiar to all foreign readers of Chinese annals. Still higher in the scale stands the governor or prefect (*Fu-tai* or *Fu-yuen*), and highest of all is the governor-general (*Tung-tuh*), commonly called "viceroy" by foreigners. The office of governor-general is of comparatively modern creation. Its origin dates from the closing years of the Ming dynasty (third decade of the seventeenth century), when, for the purpose of dealing with some questions of special importance which involved more than one province, a kind of high commissioner was temporarily appointed. To the Manchu rulers who succeeded the Ming, this post of high commissioner, or governor-general, presented itself as a useful instrument for establishing and consolidating their sway, and thus the office assumed its permanent character. Stated in the order of supposed importance the viceroyalties, or governor-generalships are: —

1. The Viceroyalty of the Two Kiang (the provinces of Kiangsi and the original Kiangnan, the latter of which is now replaced by Kiangsu

and Anhwei). The metropolis of this viceroyalty is at Nanking, on the Yangtse.

2. The Viceroyalty of Chili. This viceroy originally had his seat of government at Poating, the provincial capital, which lies westward of Peking, but he now conducts his administration at Tientsin on the south of the imperial metropolis.

3. The Viceroyalty of the Two Kuang (the provinces of Kuangtung and Kuansi). The seat of this viceroyalty is the city of Kuangtung (Canton).

4. The Viceroyalty of Min-cheh (Cheh-kiang and Fuhkien provinces). The original name of Fuhkien having been Minyueh, the term Min-cheh was formed by combining the first syllables of that name and of Cheh-kiang). The seat of government is at Foochow.

5. The Viceroyalty of the Hu-kuang (lake district, namely, the provinces of Hupeh and Hunan). The seat of authority is at Wuchang on the bank of the Yangtse, opposite to Hankow.

6. The Viceroyalty of Yun-kwei (Yunnan and Kweichou provinces), having its seat of government at the city of Yunnan.

7. The Viceroyalty of Szchuan (province of Szchuan), having its seat of government at Chengtu.

8. The Viceroyalty of Shen-kan (provinces of Shensi and Kansuh), having its seat of government at Lanchou.

A fundamental idea of the Chinese administra-

tive system is that the governor of a province is the direct link between that province and the imperial metropolis; he reports direct to the central government in Peking, and he memorialises the Emperor when such a course seems necessary. He is nominally inferior to the viceroy, but in practice neither official moves without the co-operation of the other: according to close observers, there is not even the degree of subordination that exists between the governors and the viceroy in India. Nevertheless, in the course of practical experience it has naturally resulted that some matters fall specially under the viceroy's purview while others are reserved entirely for the governor's. No general rule, however, can be laid down, different localities having different customs. Thus, though in some provinces the governor is supreme in the realm of civil promotion and of the land tax — the principal source of revenue — while the direction of foreign affairs, general military control, and the management of the salt gabelle belong to the viceroy's special functions, in others no such hard and fast line can be discerned. In short, it is not possible to formulate an accurate distinction between the functions of the two officials, and so ineffectual in practice is the interval of rank dividing them that not infrequently one of the governors in a viceroyalty is more powerful than the viceroy himself. The personal equation decides the question.

Two other local dignitaries of great importance

are the provincial treasurer and the provincial judge. The treasurer was at one time the chief official in a province, but nearly five hundred years ago it became the custom to send eunuchs or other court functionaries on "soothing circuit" and gradually these officers became a permanent institution, so that the modern name for a governor is "circuit-soother." The official relation of the treasurer to the judge is not more intimate than that of the viceroy to the governor yet the names of the four are usually found together on memorials to the throne with regard to appointments and promotions, the viceroy and the governor presenting and endorsing recommendations made by the treasurer and the judge. Without attempting to set up any clear and uniformly observed distinction between the official spheres of these four functionaries, they may be concisely described as forming the executive, consultative, and, in a measure, the judicial and legislative body of each province; in a word, its government.

For it may truly be said that each province is an independent state so far as its corporate existence is concerned. It has its own army, its own fiscal system, and its own manners and customs. For naval and commercial purposes as well as for foreign affairs there is a more or less general connection. This is especially true of foreign affairs. The pressure exercised upon China by the outer world in modern times has corrected something of the looseness of her political structure, and has compacted her eighteen provinces into two groups;

the northern being represented by the Viceroy of Chili, who acts in Tientsin as Imperial High Trade Commissioner for the North Sea-Board, and the southern by the Viceroy at Nanking, who has the same title for the South Sea-Board. These officials, especially the High Commissioner at Tientsin — which position was held for many years by the celebrated Earl (posthumous Duke) Li Hung-chang, and is now occupied by a statesman of rapidly rising fame, His Excellency Mr. Yuan Shihkai — are invested with considerable authority in everything relating to foreign affairs, though their competence is neither initiative nor conclusive. The Empire's navy is also divided into the north-sea squadron (Peiyang fleet) and the south-sea squadron (Nanyang fleet), each section being under the immediate control of the corresponding viceroy and the ultimate control of the Board of Naval Affairs in Peking. But it would be misleading to assert, as has been frequently claimed, that the navy of China is an unit for national purposes. In the war of 1894–95 between China and Japan the south-sea squadron never fired a shot in defence of the country. It remained sedulously beyond the zone of peril throughout all the incidents of the campaign, and so far as concerned its influence on the fate of the war, it might as well have had no existence.

A certain element of interdependence is furnished by the fact that some of the wealthy provinces have to contribute a part of their

revenue for the support of their less fortunate neighbours, and in cases of great emergency (as, for example, on the occasion of the Mohammedan insurrection in Yunnan fifty years ago) several provinces are laid under monetary contribution for the direct succour of the jeopardised region. Sometimes, too, a group of provinces combine to memorialise the Throne on a subject of common interest. But in the main the provinces are separate states. Their relations with the imperial metropolis, too, are limited. They have to make to the central exchequer yearly contributions the amount of which is fixed by the Board of Revenue in the capital, and they have to send up their annual contingent of students to compete for the prizes of the civil service. But for the rest Peking does not interfere with them. It neither harasses them with new laws nor makes, as a rule, any troublesome scrutiny into their affairs. The fundamental principle is that so long as a province lives at peace within its borders, the central government leaves it in peace. There must not be any insurrection, nor any discontent sufficiently strong to disturb the serenity of the imperial atmosphere in Peking, nor any complaint loud enough to reach the Throne, nor any flagrant neglect of time-honoured duties, nor any abuse of established customs, nor, above all, any excess of official zeal. Uninterrupted calm, respectability at least superficial, and solvency for public purposes, — these are all the

requirements that a province need satisfy in order to be left in secure possession of administrative autonomy. During recent years a thin thread of mutual sympathy has been woven through this wide-meshed web of states by the finger of foreign aggression and by the electric telegraph, so that the metropolitan heart grows more visibly sensitive to the incidents of provincial life. The Throne now takes professed thought for the education of the local inhabitants, for the organisation of a national army, and for the protection of foreign life and property in distant regions. But these changes are operating very slowly, and on the whole it may be said that the eight viceroyalties and the three non-viceregal provinces (Shantung, Shansi, and Honan) constitute as many kingdoms, autonomous and autocratic.

It is by the thirteen hundred *hien* magistrates that the principal functions of active administration are discharged. Mr. E. H. Parker has written a succinct and graphic account of these officials and their doings: —

> The *hien* magistrate is the very heart and soul of all official life and emolument, his dignity and attributes, in large centres such as Canton or Chungking, not falling far short in many respects of those of the Lord Mayor of London. His comparatively low "button" rank places him in easy touch with the people, whilst his position as the lowest of the *yu-sz*, or "executive," clothes him with an imperial status which even a viceroy must respect. He is the lowest officer on whom the Emperor himself (at times) directly confers an

appointment. He is so much identified with the soul of "empire," that the Emperor or Government itself is elegantly styled *hien-kwan*, or "the district magistrate." He is judge in the first instance in all matters whatsoever, civil or criminal, and also governor of the gaol, coroner, sheriff, mayor, head-surveyor, civil service examiner, tax-collector, registrar, lord-lieutenant, ædile, chief bailiff, interceder with the gods; and, in short, what the people always call him — "father and mother officer." He cuts a very different figure in a remote country district from that accepted by him in a metropolis like Canton, where he is apt to be overshadowed by innumerable civil and military superiors; just as in London the Lord Mayor is outshone by the Court and the Cabinet Ministers. In his own remote city he is autocratic and everybody. He has no technical training whatever, except in the Chinese equivalent for "Latin verse;" he has a permanent staff of trained specialists who run each department for him, share the plunder with him, and keep themselves well in the background. If a weak man, he is at the mercy of these tools, and also of his "belly-band," *i. e.* the man who advances the money for him first to secure and then to reach his post. But, if a strong man, he soon transforms all these into contributory "suckers," of the sponge he personally clutches.

The "value" of every *hien* in the Empire is of course perfectly well known; but although there is bribery and corruption at Peking as well as in the provinces, the solid basis of government is not really bad, and from my experience of Chinese officials I should say that the majority of them are men no worse than American "bosses," — that is, mere hacks of a corrupt growth, with as much "conscience" as their system vouchsafes. Purchase of official rank, and even of office, has been sadly on the increase since China began to get into

trouble with rebels and Europeans; even now, though higher office can no longer be bought, the office of *hien* may be purchased, and many even higher brevet-titles are on sale. But, putting aside questions of bribery and jobbery, most *hien* magistrates obtain their posts either because they have passed brilliant examinations, or because their parents have served the State well, or because they themselves have "earned their turn" by special services or efforts of some kind, which "services" include patriotic "offerings" (office purchase) in different shapes and sizes. Whether the officer has obtained his post honourably or otherwise, his first care is (unless he be an enthusiast or a crank, in either of which cases he promptly comes to grief) to repay the expense of working up for his post, and of getting to it; his next care is to feather his nest, keep on the soft side of the Treasurer and the Governor, and prepare the way for future advancement. This is how he does it. His most important, or at least his most profitable duty, is the collection and remission of the land-tax, for which purpose he pays a liberal salary to a highly trained conveyancer kept permanently on the premises. The Board at Peking never asks for more than the regulation amount of this, and is uncommonly glad to see even "eight-tenths" of it paid. But by means of juggling with silver rates and "copper-cash" rates; drawing pictures of local disasters and poverty; by legerdemain in counting and measuring; charging fees for the receipts, notices, tickets, attendance, and what not; it has come about in the course of time that the actual amount of the land-tax collected is anything between twice and four times the legal amount, whilst under no circumstances is the full amount even officially due ever admitted to be in hand. Say the land-tax of the district is 10,000 taels, a profit of this sum, or (at the old silver exchanges) £2,000 to £3,000 a year,

would evidently bring the man back to his native village, after twenty years of work, with a handsome fortune. But he does not get all this for himself; many superiors have to be squared in a fixed, decorous, and it may even be said imperially-recognised way.

Then there is the administration of justice. Every *hien* magistrate, bad or good, must keep an army (usually hereditary rogues) of runners, collectors, lictors, and police; and in only very few cases can he afford to pay them anything, even for food, should his integrity be so unusual as to awaken within him the desire to do so. The smallest district needs thirty, the largest 300 or more of these ruffians. In practice these men, invariably the riff-raff of the town, live on their "warrants," and no man who is "wanted under a warrant," be he witness, criminal, or plaintiff, can as a general rule get off without payments to them of some sort. Moreover, every *yâmen* has hovering in the vicinity a vulture-like multitude of champerty and maintenance men, who live by sowing ill-will, and run "hand-in-glove" with the police. The amount of tyranny and villany varies in each district with each magistrate. I have myself seen enough with my own eyes, and had innumerable free-and-easy conversations with both magistrates and runners, to enable me to state with absolute certainty that a downright bad magistrate, succeeding to a post dominated by a nest of evil-minded runners with a long-established tyrannical habit ingrained in their hearts, and practising amongst a stupid, timid, or malignant population, can with impunity assassinate anyone he likes in his own gaol, accept any bribe, commit or condone any injustice, make his fortune, and even preserve his reputation in spite of all this. On the other hand, I have seen completely honest, simple-minded, benevolent magistrates, perfectly clean-handed (subject to custom), anxious to do right, loyal to their superiors, beloved of

the people, and quite capable of restraining the police; who, again, under a kind master soon fall into the habit of reasonable obedience and fairness. I once had a very faithful black guard in my service (lent to me by a *hien* ruler for my protection) who nearly lost his life in my defence, and who used to tell me frankly of his own former crimes as we walked along the lonely country road together. There is a substratum of good in most *hien* (the current name for *chi-hien*) and their myrmidons. "'Tis oft the sight alone of means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done." With all this, however, it must be stated that most magistrates supplement their gains on land-tax account by considerable profits under the head of "justice," and the lawyer, or special "justice secretary" who "shapes the law" is the most important person behind the *hien's* back.

There are other little pickings in the way of inquests (blind-eyes), licenses, permits, presents from gentry, transfers of land, posts, storage of official grain, purveyances, etc., which go to make up the magistrate's fortune; for it is an understood thing at Peking that "outside expenditure" requires "miscellaneous funds," while the provincial magnates in turn also understand that a magistrate who is bound by unwritten custom to repair and furnish their *yâmens*, keep all public buildings in order, forward their despatches, supply their transport, and (under breath be it said) grease their palms, must have something pecuniary wherewith to do it all. Besides, most viceroys have a son who is a *hien*, and "if you won't scratch my back, I won't scratch your back." Consequently there is a comfortable feeling all round that "the less said about insignificant details the better for all concerned."

It thus appears that the chain of responsibility has for its lowest link the chief officer of the

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hien, and that the links in ascending order run thus: —

(1) *Hien* magistrate (*chih-hien*).
(2) Chief officer of the *fu* (*chih-fu*).
(3) Chief officer of the *tao* (*tao-tai*).
(4) Provincial judge.
(5) Provincial treasurer.
(6) Provincial governor (*fu-tai*).
(7) Viceroy (*tsung-tuh*).

To reach the working parts of the executive machine, the Throne gives its orders to a board in Peking; the board instructs the viceroy and governor; the viceroy and governor convey the instruction to a treasurer and judge; the two latter pass it on to the *tao-tai;* the *tao-tai* transmits it to the head of the *fu*, and the *fu* makes it known to the *hien* magistrate. There are officials of similar status to the above and corresponding functions though having different titles; namely, the *Chih-chou*, who is practically a variety of *Chih-fu*, and the *Fu-yin*, or governor of a metropolitan *fu* (namely, Peking, Nanking, or Mukden). But these do not disturb the general sequence given above.

A strict rule of the civil service in China is that men must not serve in the province of their nativity; an absolutely necessary rule, since it would be almost impossible that any official should perform his duties quite independently of clan or family influence, under the circumstances existing in China, were his own home within the range

of his administrative sphere. But the rule does not hold in the case of subordinate officials appointed locally for the purpose of discharging minor duties. These "rats under the altar," as the Chinese call them, are the "hereditary rogues" referred to by Mr. Parker in the above extract.

Such in brief being the organisation of the administration, it remains now to examine the machinery of the central government in Peking. At the head of this stands the Emperor, who is styled the "son of heaven" and who rules by divine right, bequeathing his office to his eldest son, or nominating a successor from among his own children or blood relations, in which latter case the nomination is seldom made public during the sovereign's life. The Emperor is not a despot, for in a certain sense his tenure of sovereignty depends on his conforming with the principles of wise and benevolent administration. It is true that no recognised means exist for displacing him should he ignore those principles, nor any recognised machinery for giving expression to public opinion. But since the nation is permeated with a democratic conviction of its own right to remove an immoral or tyrannical ruler, and since that conviction insensibly begets forces to make it effective, no dynasty long survives its own conspicuous fall from grace, nor does any ruler regard himself as independent of his people's affection. There is this radical difference between

the "son of heaven" who sits on the "dragon throne" in Peking and the "son of heaven" who sways the sceptre in Japan, that whereas the former may be judged by the nation or may err in the sight of heaven, the latter can do no wrong. In China, when flood, drought, pestilence, or war harasses the country, the sovereign openly attributes these calamities to his own shortcomings, and the people believe in the efficacy and propriety of his self-abasement; but in Japan, although national achievements are always attributed to the illustrious virtues of the monarch, who in turn assigns them to the gracious assistance of his ancestors, no public misfortune is ever associated with his faults. The Japanese system is the more logical; the Chinese the more practical.

Nominally nearest to the Throne for administrative purposes is the Cabinet (*nui-koh*), to which some foreign writers give the name of "grand secretariat." It comprises four chief and two assistant Ministers (or Councillors), half of whom are Chinese and half Manchus. The Cabinet includes also ten "scholars," of whom six are Manchus and four Chinese. It is not uncommon to speak of the six Ministers of the Cabinet as "elders" (*koh-lao*), a term constantly applied to officials occupying a similar position in Japan in the days of the Tokugawa administration. The Cabinet submits affairs of state to the Throne in writing, attaching to each document slips of

paper on which are recorded the advice of the Ministers together with the reasons for tendering it. The time chosen for submitting these papers is daylight, and the duty of submitting them is entrusted to the "Ten Scholars," the Emperor's will being signified by a stroke in vermilion ink upon the suggestion he approves. The mass of affairs thus brought to imperial notice is enormous. It includes everything of a fiscal or financial nature; all appointments, promotions, and dismissals of officials; naval and military matters; the affairs of the outlying dominions; criminal cases, and so on. There are twenty-five privy seals, having different forms, which are used for different purposes and are kept by the "Ten Scholars." There is also a translators' bureau in the Cabinet; a very necessary office in view of the many dialects spoken not merely in different provinces of the vast Chinese Empire, but also among the foreign or indigenous elements of its population. Altogether the staff of the Cabinet numbers about two hundred. The four "great councillors" divide between them the functions discharged by a prime minister in a western state, the first of them being, however, regarded as premier. The members of the Cabinet have functions other than the above, but they are chiefly of a ceremonial character.[1]

More influential, perhaps, than the Cabinet, though nominally of inferior rank, is the Privy

[1] See Appendix, note 8.

Council (*kiunki-chu*), which consists generally of four "great Ministers" headed by a prince of the blood. There is no fixed rule as to the source whence members of this Council are taken; any high dignitary may be appointed, though an even balance between Chinese and Manchus is usually preserved. The sovereign is supposed to make the selection at his pleasure. The Privy Council assembles in the Palace every morning between five and six o'clock, and the Councillors, seated upon mats and low cushions, receive the Emperor's commands and transcribe them for transmission to the executive. Every important deliberation, whether judicial, legislative, or administrative, is attended by this Council; it forms a committee of ways and means in time of war, and from lists kept in its possession the names of officials worthy of promotion or special appointment are submitted to the Throne. It is not to be understood that the Council sits only once daily in the Emperor's presence: audiences are granted whenever necessary. Three bureaux are organised in the Privy Council: one is a historiographical office for compiling records of important events; the second performs duties of translation, and the third has to observe whether the edicts of the Throne are carried into effect.

Nothing that happens throughout the realm, nothing that concerns it, is supposed to be beyond the ken of these two bodies, the Cabinet and the Privy Council. With what degree of efficiency

and intelligence the Ministers and Councillors discharge their functions may be gathered from facts patent to all, for although it is a common habit of foreign observers to denounce officials as universally venal and incompetent, or at least to admit only exceptions so rare as to prove the rule, the world has before it an object-lesson of unmistakable significance in the good order and tranquillity that used to reign throughout the vast regions governed from Peking before foreign intercourse became a widely disquieting factor. The articulation of the Empire is not compact. Events that would scarcely be deemed cardinal elsewhere sometimes shock it perceptibly, and in the presence of great emergencies its machinery breaks down. But under normal circumstances the nation is governed with scarcely any consciousness of being ruled, and the people's sense of fitness is not offended by administrative solecisms.

Under the Cabinet and the Council of State there are Six Boards (*Lok-po*), each having two presidents and four vice-presidents, in which offices the balance of power between Chinese and Manchus is strictly preserved. The first of these is the Board of Civil Office (*Li-po*), which manages everything relating to the civil service of the Empire, from suggesting promotions and degradations to recommending for ranks and rewards. The Board has no competence to make appointments or removals itself: it merely sub-

mits proposals to the Throne, and in the case of high appointments the Cabinet and the Privy Council act as advisory overseers. It is evident, however, that the business of such an extensive realm could not be discharged without frequent dislocations if every appointment or removal of an official had to receive preliminary consideration in the capital. Therefore the provincial authorities are empowered to fill up vacancies as soon as they occur from the ranks of "expectants" who have duly qualified, and the Civil Office Board's operations are thus materially reduced. There are four bureaux in this Board, one of which is concerned solely with the distribution of titles, patents, and posthumous honours. This last class of distinctions has much importance in China, where ancestors are frequently ennobled for the merits of their descendants; an exceptional custom, due to the fact that the rites of ancestral worship are proportionate to the rank of the deceased, not to that of the worshipper. Hence, since it would be obviously contrary to the dictates of filial piety that a son holding the rank of a nobleman should pay to his ancestors the tribute of a commoner's worship only, this difficulty is solved by making titles retrospective.

The second of the Six Boards is that of Revenue (*Hu-po*). Its functions are very extensive, for they naturally include keeping the census, measuring and assessing lands, controlling privileges of transport, determining the revenues and mutual

appropriations of the provinces, and receiving and distributing the various articles with which some taxes are paid, as grain, manufactured goods, and other kinds of produce. It is worth mention that a subordinate bureau of this Board compiles lists of Manchu girls from among whom the inmates of the imperial harem are selected. The connection between such a function and the duties of a board of revenue is derived from the fact that the allowances and outfits of these girls have to be controlled by the bureau.

The third Board is that of Rites (*Li-po*). Etiquette enters so largely into official and private life in China that the duties of this Board are wide and important. There are five kinds of ritual observance — those of propitiation, of conciliation, of hospitality, of mourning, and of military matters — which are all discussed and directed by the Board with due proclamation to the people at large. Questions of procedure, of literary distinctions, of religious honours, of tribute, of banquets, of bounties, of court etiquette, of official costumes, of equipages, of insignia of rank, of ceremonies connected with intercourse between men of title or high status, of forms of inter-state communication, of everything relating to literary examination or to the establishment of Government schools and academies, — all these lie within the Board's province. The Board includes a bureau which superintends the rites observed in worshipping deities and spirits

of departed monarchs, sages, and worthies, and in "saving the sun and moon when eclipsed," which phenomena popular belief supposes to be due to a dragon that consumes the luminary. "The details of all the multifarious ritual duties of the Board occupy fourteen volumes of the Statutes,"[1] for it may truly be said that so far as history tells, no nation ever paid such minute attention to etiquette and ritualism as the Chinese have paid during the past three thousand years. "Connected with the Board of Rites is a Board of Music, containing an indefinite number of officers whose duties are to study the principles of harmony and melody, to compose musical pieces and form instruments proper to play them, and then suit both to the various occasions on which they are required."[1]

The fourth Board is that of War (*Ping-po*). Its name explains its duties, but does not prepare the reader to learn that naval affairs also used to be under the control of this Board. The Board of War has a narrower range of duties than might be supposed, for it exercises no authority over the Twenty-four Banners (to be presently spoken of) and very little over the provincial troops. These two sections, together with bodies of "braves" or irregulars, raised from time to time as occasion requires and disbanded when the need for them ceases, constitute the army of China, about which it will be convenient to speak here in some detail.

[1] See Appendix, note 9.

The twenty-four Banners are divided into two groups of eight and sixteen respectively, the former consisting of pure Manchus, the latter of Mongols and Chinese descended from the men that aided the Manchu dynasty to conquer China. They are supposed to number about a quarter of a million men, and they furnish guards for the Palace as well as garrisons for important cities and fortresses. Their nominal pay is four taels (about twelve shillings) per month. The Tartar garrisons in great cities, like Canton, Fuchou, Hangchou, etc., are under a general of their own nationality and form a special caste, said to be in many cases little better than honourable prisoners confined within the limits of the city walls. They are supported out of the local revenues, but a special contribution is exacted from all the provinces for the maintenance of Banner-men in Peking. The Tartar general in a city nominally outranks even the viceroy within whose jurisdiction his command lies.

The provincial troops, or Green Banners, as they are called, are an uncertain quantity. Chinese returns put them at 650,000 in round numbers, but by some authorities they are supposed not to exceed 400,000. The discrepancy is mainly due to the fact that official figures cannot be trusted in such matters. A commanding officer may draw pay and allowances for a thousand men, but not more than five or six hundred may be actually enrolled. A soldier of the provincial forces gets

nominally three taels (nine shillings) per month, out of which he must buy his own rations. It is generally believed that the men do not receive nearly so much, a large percentage being appropriated by the officers, but beyond the established fact that the private's pay is often in arrears, nothing can be said with assurance on this subject. The men's uniform is very sensible, — a loose tunic falling over loose trousers, drawn close round the ankles, and cloth boots with thick paper soles. The garments are of cotton; the tunic blue, brown, or yellow with facings of a different colour; the trousers generally blue, and on the breast or back a large circle enclosing ideographs that show the corps to which the wearer belongs. This uniform costs four taels (twelve shillings), and twenty taels are allowed for the purchase of a cavalry horse. Altogether the annual appropriations for the army now aggregate some forty million taels (seven millions sterling approximately), though less than a moiety of that amount used to suffice before contact with Occidental civilisation imposed upon China the duty of squandering her resources upon machines for slaughtering human beings.

In every province there is a General, commander-in-chief of the Green Banner forces. Like the Tartar General, he outranks a viceroy. Under him are from two to six brigadier-generals, each in command of a brigade; there being also, as a matter of course, a regular establishment of

junior officers from colonels to lieutenants, as well as of non-commissioned officers from sergeants-major to corporals.

The above figures show the state of affairs prior to changes consequent upon the import of new ideas from the West; changes which have not yet been sufficiently systematised to lend themselves to any accurate analysis. Their gist is that eminent viceroys and governors have organised forces on European lines, and equipped them with modern weapons. The doings of these forces have not yet furnished a cardinal answer to the question whether the Chinese — not the Manchus or the Mongols, but the Chinese — can be moulded into efficient soldiers. It is frequently asserted as a historical fact that they ceased to be soldiers after a brief period of national existence — brief in comparison with the long life of the Empire. The lust of battle is declared to be unknown to them, and never to have been known to them. On the other hand, the most hostile critic cannot deny that their physique is excellent, and that civilian members of the population have frequently shown themselves possessed of courage and coolness in a marked degree. Mr. E. H. Parker, one of the most eminent sinologues of the era, who passed twenty-five years in China, says: "I have found my Chinese followers in all provinces invariably true and stanch to me in times of danger, and I should not hesitate to lead a Chinese force, properly armed and brought into

shape under my own supervision, against any European troops in existence. The Chinese have not the fighting instinct — that is to say, they do not relish coming to blows 'just for the fun of the thing' — but they are not afraid of death, and they have no little honest pride, gratitude for kindness, and sympathy with brave and disinterested leaders such as Gordon. For all these reasons I do not hesitate to 'stick up' for the poor Chinaman and to assert that he has in him the makings of a soldier." Other competent judges have expressed similar opinions, and the writer of these pages has seen individual Chinamen behave with conspicuous gallantry, if he has also seen them conduct themselves in an essentially craven manner. The balance of testimony is in their favour, and when it is affirmed, on the one hand, that they have frequently gone down before foreign invaders, it must be remembered, on the other, that during many centuries of their early national existence they raised and maintained on their northern frontiers an effective barrier against the inflow of the militant tide that swept to and fro in central Asia, a tide including such elements as the Turks and the Huns whose onsets Europe found itself unable to resist successfully.

But whatever may be said of the Chinese themselves, it is certain that the Manchus and the Mongols when they marched to the conquest of the Middle Kingdom in the seventeenth century were men of prowess and pluck, and that

they had not lost those qualities when they first came into collision with European troops. The defence of Chinkiang on the 21st of July, 1842, was a fine example of enduring courage when twenty-three hundred Manchus resisted, almost successfully, the assault of nine thousand well-equipped and highly disciplined English troops, to whose weapons and manner of fighting they were strangers, and finally, after having shown admirable bravery, chose suicide rather than surrender, their general perishing in flames kindled by his own direction. In recent times it has been insisted by some eminent writers that the Tartar and Mongol banner-men have not maintained their military virtues; that their robust simplicity and manliness are things of the past, and that they have "degenerated into idle, flabby, and too often opium-smoking parasites." But such assertions are difficult to reconcile with the proofs given at Chinkiang in 1842 and at Taku in 1860. There has been nothing in the history of the past half-century to account for the degeneration so often predicated of Tartar and Mongol manhood. The men have not changed, and the most reasonable explanation of their inefficiency as fighting units in modern times is that the rapidity of the age's progress has rendered their old-fashioned ways more or less paralysing. Assuredly it is not accurate to describe the whole Chinese army as "simply a rabble, provided with bags of rice, gay flags, umbrellas, fans and (quite

a secondary matter) rusty guns, jingalls, spears, heavy swords, and (very occasionally) fairly good rifles and cartridges of a date always behind the time." Such a description may have wide applicability, but it must be qualified to the extent of admitting that there are sections of the army to-day which leave little if anything to be desired in the matter of equipment. Most conspicuous formerly among such sections were one organised by the great viceroy, the late Li Hung-chang, in Chili; others organised by the Yangtse viceroys Chang and Liu in their respective administrations, and yet another organised by Governor Yuan in Shantung. It is estimated that there are now about a hundred thousand troops in the province of Chili, well armed and tolerably trained, but as to the Green Banner-men throughout the provinces, no competent critic attaches any importance to them as fighting forces. Nor indeed can any one venture to speak with even approximate assurance about the army in Chili. People have been taught by experience to refrain from prediction where China's forces are concerned. For if in her modern career occasions have repeated themselves when the outside world agreed to take a serious view of her military capacity, invariably these seasons of hopefulness were followed by practical demonstrations of her inefficiency.

The first of such occasions was the period immediately succeeding the Taiping rebellion of 1860. This involves a brief analysis. If Chinese

institutions are often glaringly defective in foreign eyes, it does not by any means follow that their defects are always invisible to Chinese eyes. Sometimes they are purposely left in a state of partial inanition because to vitalise them might be to endow them with dangerous potentialities. That is the case with a large section of the army. China has owed much of her domestic tranquillity in the past to the weakness of her provincial troops. She has kept them just strong enough to cope with what may be called the normal incidents of local life, such as petty riots, fiscal disturbances, and raids of bandits, but she has never suffered them to grow so strong as to be a formidable factor of insurrection. Thus when the Taiping rebellion, an affair of quite abnormal dimensions, broke out, the first essential was to organise troops to quell it; and the ultimate success of these levies, together with the éclat attaching to the "Ever-victorious Army" led by a British officer, Gordon, suggested a respectful estimate of China's military capacities. Then, in the immediate sequel of these events, the great Viceroy Chang Chih-tung set up iron works at Hanyang and an arsenal at the Pagoda anchorage of Foochow; the still greater Li Hung-chang founded naval and military colleges at Tientsin, and organised under foreign instructors in Chili an army which seemed to possess all the attributes of strength, while the Viceroy Liu Kun-yi at Nanking took similarly enlightened steps, having

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free recourse to the teaching of German tacticians and strategists. Moreover, the reconquest of Yunnan province from Suliman the Panthay in 1871, and that of Turkestan from Yakub Beg in 1874, followed by a creditable stand against the French in Tonquin, were object lessons from which the world drew large deductions. Further, immediately after the conclusion of peace with France a Naval Board was established (1886) in Peking and a fleet was purchased from Europe. The nucleus of the latter was a flotilla of gun-boats, broad-beamed, flat-bottomed, and each carrying one heavy gun; an unwieldy style of craft, intended solely for river service and called the "Alphabeticals" because they were named after the letters of the Greek alphabet, not, it need scarcely be premised, by the Chinese themselves, but by the builders of the boats. These were quickly supplemented by two line-of-battle ships and by a number of cruisers and smaller craft, all of the best modern types, manned by trained crews and officered by men who had received due naval education and were credited with a full knowledge of their duties. This powerful fleet, known as the "Peiyang Squadron," had the advantage of learning naval manœuvres from a competent British officer, and in 1894 it was pronounced by a British admiral to be an efficient fighting force. Another fleet had been organised in the south — the Nanyang (south-sea squadron) — having its basis at Foochow.

This, too, was manned and officered by trained men, and had been under the direction of a British naval officer, but in material it was inferior to the Northern Squadron, several of the vessels having been built at Shanghai, Foochow, and Canton. Simultaneously with the acquisition and organisation of these naval forces steps were taken to build forts at the mouths of important rivers — as the Peiho, the Min, and the Yangtse — and three naval bases were constructed, namely, Port Arthur and Talien on the Liaotung Peninsula and Wei-hai-wei on the Shantung promontory, these places being fortified according to the best principles of military engineering, and their armaments, as well as those of the river defences, being of the most modern and powerful character. Here, then, the world saw a China apparently powerful for purposes of defence; so powerful indeed that foreign statesmen began to model their policy towards the Middle Kingdom on lines of unprecedented deference; so powerful that when Japan ventured to challenge this revitalised colossus to a life-and-death struggle in 1894, the nations predicted certain ruin for the presumptuous little Empire, and even when the first successes fell to the lot of the pigmy, it was still confidently predicted that the staying power of the giant would be conclusive in the long run. Yet for China there never was a turn in the tide of disaster, never a ray of sunshine in the night of defeat. The war demonstrated beyond all room

for cavil that she could not fight; not yet, at all events, however favourably circumstanced and however well armed.

Naturally, after incurring such terrible disgrace, China pulled herself together, or seemed to do so. She saw plainly that the provincial troops, the Green Banners, were useless, and although she could not abolish them all since they performed police and excise duties of an extensive nature, she set about abolishing a large portion of them, and collecting in the metropolitan province an army which should have the advantage of centralisation. It is true that these reforms were rudely interrupted in 1899 by a conservative reaction, which restored Manchu authority under the Empress Dowager as against Chinese progressive ideas under the auspices of the young Emperor. Yet the organisation and equipment of a strong army was part of the Manchu programme also, and during the five years that separated the conclusion (1895) of the war with Japan from the Boxer outbreak of 1900 — an outbreak having for its ultimate purpose the expulsion of all foreigners from China and the severing of foreign relations — China was supposed to have once more prepared herself to beat back any attempts against Peking, at all events. Indeed the defences of the metropolitan province still retained something of the prestige that attached to the whole military and naval machine of China before her war with Japan, for though

the latter's troops had with little difficulty stormed the first-class fortresses of Talien, Port Arthur, and Wei-hai-wei, their attacks had been delivered from the rear, where facilities for resistance had not been largely provided, and consequently no certain inference could be drawn as to what might happen at places like Taku, Tientsin, and Peking, where the defenders would not be exposed to similarly irregular enterprises. Yet when the test of actual practice came to be applied, when Chili itself became the battle-field in 1900, the Chinese did not make a much better showing than they had done five years previously in Manchuria and Shantung. The same campaign fought at a somewhat earlier date might have been judged more leniently. But after the war in South Africa had demonstrated the enormous potentialities of the defence and the fatal futility of direct attacks upon strong fortresses held by troops using modern weapons of precision, the puny efforts of the Chinese to defend Taku, Tientsin, and Peking against the assaults of forces not better equipped than themselves and less numerous, constituted a fiasco as flagrant as the collapse of 1894–1895. After these two wars people set themselves to inquire seriously whether the Chinese were radically incapable of fighting or whether their capacity had been paralysed by some special and remediable causes. Many theories were advanced and many explanations offered, some suggesting the former conclusion, some the latter. It is

worth while to consider these theories briefly in detail, since evidently the question of China's military potentiality has absorbing interest for the world at large.

The reason habitually put forward by Western critics to account for China's failures and defects in administrative and fiscal problems is also placed first in this context, namely, peculation. There is ground to think, it is true, that the effects of corruption in China are exaggerated by foreign observers, and even that much of what they call corruption, not being recognised as such by the Chinese themselves, does not exercise a demoralising effect. But in the matter of military equipment and organisation corruption, though on a small scale, may have fatal consequences by affecting the supply of arms and ammunition. Little of that kind of defect was observable, however, either in the war of 1894–1895 or in the Chili campaign of 1900. The Chinese carried weapons of the best description, had an ample supply of ammunition, and were furnished with large reserve stores of warlike material, as was proved on the capture of the arsenals near Tientsin. It is true that at the battle of the Yalu in 1894 — the only great naval engagement in the China-Japan war — many of the Chinese shells were said to have carried bursting-charges of sand, and others are reported to have had dummy fuses. But if such defects really existed, they do not appear to have contributed materially to the result of the

fight, and at any rate the defeat suffered by the Chinese squadron on that occasion cannot be classed among the fiascos of the war, nor can it be said to have reflected any dishonour upon the vanquished. It was on shore that the troops of the Middle Kingdom showed incapacity, and on shore they were even better armed than the men at whose hands they suffered such disastrous defeats. It does not seem reasonable, therefore, to attribute their weakness in battle to the influence of corruption.

Nepotism is another often-repeated explanation. The units of each corps are taken, it is said, from one family or one clan. They are thus without territorial ties. Patriotism is not an effective motive of their actions. They will not be disciplined by men of another clan, and they are unsuited to form parts of a national organisation. But whatever force such a criticism may have in the case of the Chinese themselves, it certainly cannot apply to the Manchus or the Mongols. Theirs being essentially a national army, ought to be conspicuously free from the defects here enumerated. Further, if such defects exist now, it would seem that they ought to have existed still more powerfully in former times, when steamers, telegraphs, and newspapers had not yet brought the various sections of the Empire into moral contact and taught them to take a common survey of foreign politics. Here it is apposite to quote some of the statements made by British

officers with reference to their experiences during China's first foreign war in 1839–1842:—

The Chinese showed more courage than skill. The English sailors pronounced both their guns and their powder to be excellent. (Engagement of November 3, 1839, off Chuen-pi).

The English officers described the Chinese defence of the Bogue Forts on January 7, 1841, as "obstinate and honourable."

"The batteries [at Amoy, 1841] were admirably constructed and, manned by Europeans, no force could have stood before them. They were never completely silenced by the ships' guns and, it is believed, they never would have been. Let the Chinese be trained, and well found with European implements and munitions, and depend upon it they will prove themselves no contemptible foe."

"Many of the Chinese, seeing our new advance into the battery, quickly turned and a very smart affair followed. They assembled in great numbers close to some brass guns and then fought like Turks. . . . Their conduct, in fact, was noble. Nothing could have surpassed it." (Tinghai, 1841.)

"The main body of the Chinese was routed without much difficulty, but 300 desperate men shut themselves up in a walled enclosure and made an obstinate resistance. They held out until three-quarters of them were slain, when the survivors, fifty wounded men, accepted the quarter offered them from the first." (Chefoo, 1841.)

"The Chinese were the worst equipped and the most innocent of military knowledge in the long list of Asiatic foes with whom the British had come into contact. Often they were no better than a badly armed mob, and even the Manchus had no more formidable

weapons than their bows and spears. Yet not once did these badly armed and ignorant men evince cowardice. The English commanders always testified to their gallantry, even when hopeless, and to their devotion to duty when most other people would have thought only of their personal safety. Their defeat under all the circumstances was inevitable, but they knew how to save their reputation for courage and to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that men who would fight so manfully when victory was practically impossible could never be permanently conquered, and only needed the proper arms and knowledge to hold their own against Europeans."

Corruption and nepotism had prevailed among the Chinese during tens of cycles preceding the above events just as widely and forcibly as they prevailed during the few decades that separated those events from the wars of 1894–1895 and 1900. No evil or paralysing inferences operative now were inoperative then, and to attribute to innate defects of the race the military incompetence shown in recent wars is to forget the high qualities displayed in earlier fights. It must be assumed that the Chinese are just as capable of making good soldiers to-day as they were sixty years ago, and that the reasons of their latest failures are to be sought in accidents of their system or in altered methods of warfare rather than in the nature of the men.

Two other factors of demoralisation are cited, and if they are correct, each of them acting alone would account for much of the trouble,

INFLICTING PUNISHMENT IN THE PRESENCE OF COURT OFFICIALS.

while both acting in combination might explain the whole. One is that a Chinese army does not include any medical staff or hospital corps. Where a man falls, there he lies, condemned, as he supposes, to die a lingering death of agony, and hopeless of succour unless he can crawl off and find charitable shelter in some remote hamlet. Brave men going into action seldom pause to think how things will fare with them should they fall wounded, but the bravest man can scarcely escape demoralisation when he sees his comrades left to perish like dogs, and when he expects that such must be his own fate unless he escapes unscathed. That he should learn to dread wounds and to shrink from them seems inevitable under such circumstances. The second factor of demoralisation, evidently the more powerful factor of the two, is said to be the want of good officers. It is scarcely too much to affirm that the Chinese army is altogether without officers. A Chinese officer does not lead his men into battle; he follows them; and the example he sets them is, not to face danger, but to fly from it. Therein lies the cardinal difference between China and Japan from a military point of view. The whole h art of the Japanese officer is in his profession. In time of peace he devotes himself with unflagging zeal to the instruction and organisation of his men. He has no purpose in life except to perfect himself in his own duties and to train his men for the efficient discharge of theirs. In war

he shares their hardships; sets them an example of heroic bravery and is always at their head in moments of peril. The Chinese officer, on the contrary, seems to have no pride of "cloth." He regards his post mainly as a source of plunder, and himself as the possessor of an opportunity to get rich. Intelligent enough to know that defeat is inevitable for troops such as he commands, he prepares for the contingency by holding himself always in readiness to run away. Such, at least, is the modern appreciation of his *morale* and his methods, and if it be a correct appreciation, the conclusion is plain that no army could fight stoutly under such leadership. But, on the other hand, it will be at once objected that these defects also — absence of medical organisation and want of good officers — are not of modern development: they existed always in doubtless much the same degree as they exist now, yet they did not formerly prevent displays of conspicuous bravery. Altered methods of warfare resulting from the use of arms of precision and long range — the loose formation, the necessity for highly intelligent recourse to cover, the futility of direct frontal attack and need of flanking movements — are all calculated to accentuate the consequences of bad training and defective leadership. But all these analyses expose nothing that is radical, nothing that is irremediable, and though it would appear that, other things being equal, the Chinaman, being deficient in the fighting instinct, is never

likely to make as fine a soldier as the Turk, the Japanese, the Teuton, or the Anglo-Saxon, there is certainly no visible reason why with good training, good equipment, good leadership, and a good cause, he should not be able to hold his own for defensive purposes. But it is hard to carry imagination to the extent of picturing him as a successor of the Huns and the Goths, or of seeing his units combine to form that wave of yellow peril which, according to some eminent publicists, may yet sweep over Asia and Europe from the East.

Reverting from this lengthy digression to the machinery of administration in Peking, the fact, incidentally mentioned above, should be repeated here, namely, that a Naval Board (*Haichun Yamên*) was established in the capital in 1886, and that it had for its first President Prince Chun. This Board nominally controls all affairs relating to the Empire's sea-forces, but in practice the range of its authority has hitherto been limited to the northern section of the Navy, the business of the southern section being under the direction of the Viceroy at Nanking. At the present time, however, China can scarcely be said to possess any fleet. She certainly has no force that could make itself felt at sea against any of the foreign squadrons in the Pacific. Her Northern Fleet was annihilated by the Japanese in 1894–1895, and her Southern is almost a negligible quantity.

The fifth Board among the governing bodies in

the capital is the *Hing-po*, or Board of Punishments. A measure of mystery attaches to the duties of this Board, for though its functions may be roughly described as those of a court of cassation and administration, the limits of its power are vague. Whenever high officials are guilty of any offence, the Throne directs that they be handed over to the Board of Punishments for the determination of a penalty. But although such committals are very numerous, they constitute only a small part of the Board's duties. Its principal business is to revise all the capital sentences pronounced by the tribunals throughout the Empire, for which purpose its officers combine with those of the Censorate and the Supreme Court — to be presently spoken of — to form the Three Law Chambers (*San-fuh-sz*), and these, again, with six other tribunals, organise a collegiate Court of Errors. As a matter of fact, this particular function of revision is, to a large extent, merely formal, since a majority of the persons capitally convicted in the provinces either die in prison or are executed before their cases reach the Court of Errors or the Three Chambers in the metropolis. Yet the organisation of such tribunals indicates the high value set upon life by Chinese legislators, in theory at all events, though in practice their system is conspicuously unsuccessful. It is part of the business of the Board of Punishments to provide for the publication of legislative enactments, to superintend jails and to receive moneys levied

in commutation of punishments. But if this function of superintending jails be performed at all, its results are absolutely imperceptible. The sum of the matter is that while the machinery of government is admirably constructed, its working achievements are strikingly defective. "If," writes Dr. Wells Williams, "the administration of the law in China corresponded with the equity of most of its enactments, or with the caution taken to prevent collusion, malversation, and haste on the part of the judges, it would be incomparably the best governed country out of Christendom." A tribute of respect must at least be paid to the men who devised this system. It is one of the remnants of China's great past.

The Board of Works (*Kung-po*) is another illustration of Chinese capacity for organising administrative machinery. It has the direction and government of all public works throughout the Empire and the control of expenditures incurred on account of them. Among its bureaux there is one that superintends the manufacture of all warlike material; takes charge of arsenals, military stores, and camp equipage; regulates weights and measures, and, by a strange combination of duties, sorts and appraises the pearls obtained from fisheries, and furnishes death-warrants to governors and generals. Another bureau is responsible for the condition of city walls; of palaces, temples, altars, and other public edifices; for the furnishing of tents and utensils used on imperial prog-

resses and for supplying ship-building timber as well as porcelain and glassware for use in the Palace. A third bureau is charged with the direction of matters relating to riverine conservation, to irrigation, to canals and bridges, to roads and sewers, and to the building of arsenals. A fourth attends to the condition of imperial mausolea, to the erection of sepulchres and memorial tablets for persons honoured with a state funeral, and to the interior decoration of temples and palaces. Finally, there is a special office for the management of the mint and another for the manufacture of gunpowder. This recital suggests a body of officials thoroughly efficient for all purposes of public works, but when the results are examined, it is seen that incompetence and perfunctoriness everywhere characterise this branch of state affairs. Rivers are not controlled, canals are not kept in a navigable condition, roads and bridges are not repaired, sewage is not removed, and public edifices are left in a state of dilapidation and decay. Such is the common rule in China to-day: a system irreproachable in theory, but wretchedly defective in practice.

An important branch of the central government is commonly called the Censorate, but in reality, as its Chinese name (*Tu-chah-yuen*, or tribunal of general examination) signifies, it may be more correctly described as an administrative court having also functions of inspection. Combined with the Board of Punishments and the

Supreme Court (Talisz), it forms a high chamber for revising criminal cases and hearing appeals from the judgments of provincial tribunals, but its own special function is to oversee the public offices, to investigate their manner of performing their duties, and to impeach their officials in case of misconduct, the result of such impeachment being that the incriminated official is handed over to the Board of Punishments for examination and the determination of a penalty. There is no superior limit to such impeachments. They may be directed against the occupant of the throne himself, and, indeed, are not infrequently so directed. Many cases are on record of memorials addressed by censors to the sovereign, setting forth some fault in his administration or some blemish in his manner of life. Thus, after the return of the Court to Peking (1902) in the sequel of the Boxer troubles, when the Treasury had been emptied by the cost of the war, by the necessity of paying large indemnities to foreign nations, and by the interruption of trade, industry, and agriculture, a censor strongly condemned the Empress Dowager's extravagant arrangements for visiting the tombs of her ancestors. The Emperor, on receipt of the memorial, openly denounced the accusation as untrue, and challenged the people to judge between the Empress Dowager and the censor, whom, however, His Majesty refrained from punishing. A celebrated case is that of the Censor Sung who

addressed to the Emperor Kiaking (1766–1820) a remonstrance against his attachment to play-actors and strong drink. Kiaking, much incensed, summoned the official to his presence, and angrily demanded what penalty would be fitting for the author of such a document. Sung answered, "Death by the slicing process." Being ordered to select some other punishment, he said, "Let me be beheaded," and being again required to choose, he named "strangling." The Emperor ultimately appointed him to be Governor of Ili, thus rewarding his probity while placing him beyond the reach of exercising it inconveniently. Naturally the censors do not largely avail themselves of their liberty to reprove members of the imperial family, preferring rather criticisms of officials whose acts seem to call for public censure. The Emperor Taou-kwang's (1820–1850) definition of a censor's functions is generally quoted as comprehensive and intelligent: "The Censors are allowed to tell me the reports they hear, to speak plainly about any defect or impropriety they may observe in the monarch himself. But they are not permitted to employ their pencils in writing memorials which are filled with vague surmises and mere probabilities or suppositions. This could only fill my mind with doubt and uncertainty, and I should not know what men to employ. Were such a spirit indulged the detriment to government would be serious." The Censorate is under two presidents, one a Manchu

PAGODA ISLAND AND ANCHORAGE.

PAGODA ISLAND AND ANCHORAGE.

and one a Chinese; it has four deputies in the capital, and all governors and lieutenant-governors are *ex-officio* deputies. Its officers are sent on periodical visits of inspection to various parts of the Empire, and by the people they are often called the sovereign's "eyes and ears."

The foreign affairs of the Empire, in which are included matters relating to Mongolia, Ili, Thibet, and other outlying regions, are managed by the *Lifan-yuen*, or Colonial Office. By this department the inhabitants of the territories beyond the eighteen provinces are distinguished as *waifan*, or "outside foreigners," while the various non-Chinese tribes still inhabiting parts of the provinces, are called *nuifan*, or "inside foreigners." *Wai-i*, or "external barbarians," used to be the epithet applied by them to the inhabitants of all foreign countries not acknowledging the supremacy and enjoying the protection of China, but the incongruity of such a term has been reluctantly recognised of late years. There are six bureaux in this Colonial Department. Their functions are carefully and intelligently prescribed, not the least important being the overseeing of the Lama hierarchs in Mongolia and Thibet; of the Mohammedan Beys in Nanlu, and of the inner and outer Mongol tribes. Diplomatic relations with treaty Powers are not, however, in the hands of the *Lifan-yuen*. They were removed from its control in 1862, after the capture of Peking by an Anglo-French army, when

a foreign office — *Tsungli Yamên*, or general managing bureau — was organised specially for that purpose; organised in such a manner as to be capable of offering a maximum of obstruction to the progress of business when occasion suggested delay. For its members elaborated an adroit system of service routine such that whenever the demands of a Foreign Representative began to be inconveniently urgent, he found himself confronted by a new Minister of the *Tsungli Yamên* with whom the whole question had to be discussed *de novo*. Before such a round of repetition the most zealous diplomacy ultimately grew exhausted and the *Tsungli Yamên* obtained a high reputation for the art of inaction. Therefore, when the capture of Peking in 1900 by an allied force of all the treaty Powers and the consequent flight of the Court to the ancient capital of Hsiang in Shensi, created an opportunity for wresting reforms from China at the mouth of the cannon, one of the demands made and acceded to was that the *Tsungli Yamên* should be replaced by a foreign office of Occidental type, presided over by a minister who would not be unable to elude his responsibilities by a perpetual process of substitution.

In addition to the Six Boards and other bodies enumerated above, the governmental machinery in Peking includes also a Sacrificial Court for directing religious observances, an Imperial Steed Court, a Banqueting Court, and a Ceremonial

Court. These, though not forming parts of the ordinary administrative body, call for mention as indicating the degree of elaboration to which official organisation has been carried in China.

From what has been written thus far it will have been gathered that the administrative posts are distributed so as to preserve a balance of power between the Manchus and the Chinese. But the division is by no means equal. Thus, out of a total of twenty thousand officials in Peking — in round numbers — the Manchus and Mongols combined do not aggregate one-fifth, and among two thousand officials of and above the grade of Chih-hien in the provinces, the proportion of Manchus and Mongols is still smaller. Nevertheless, owing to the antipathy that exists between Chinese and Manchus, this intermingling of the two, though in unequal proportions, sets up an automatically checking action between the parts of the machine. "In the mutual relations of the great departments of the Chinese Government," says Dr. Williams, "the principles of responsibility and surveillance among the officers are plainly exhibited, while regard has been paid to such a division and apportionment of labour as would secure great efficiency and care, if every member of the machine faithfully did his duty. Two presidents are stationed over each Board to assist and watch each other, while the two presidents oversee the four vice-presidents; the president of one Board

is sometimes the vice-president of another; and by means of the Censorate and the General Council every portion is brought under the cognisance of several independent officers, whose mutual jealousy and regard for individual advancement, or a partial desire for the well-being of the State, affords the Emperor some guarantee of fidelity. The seclusion in which he lives makes it difficult for any conspirator to approach his person, but his own fears regarding the management of such an immense empire compel him to inform himself respecting the action of ministers, generals, and proconsular officers. The conduct and devotion of hundreds of officers during the wars with Great Britain, and the suppression of rebellions within the past thirty years, afford proof enough that he has attached his subordinates to his service by some other principle than fear. . . . In order to enable the superior officers to exercise greater vigilance over their inferiors, they have the privilege of sending special messengers, invested with full power, to every part of their jurisdiction. The Emperor himself never visits the provinces judicially, nor has an Emperor been south of the capital during the past hundred years; he, therefore, constantly sends commissioners or legates, called *Kinchai*, to all parts of the Empire, ostensibly entrusted with the management of a particular business, but required also to take a general surveillance of what is going on. . . . Governors in like manner send their deputies

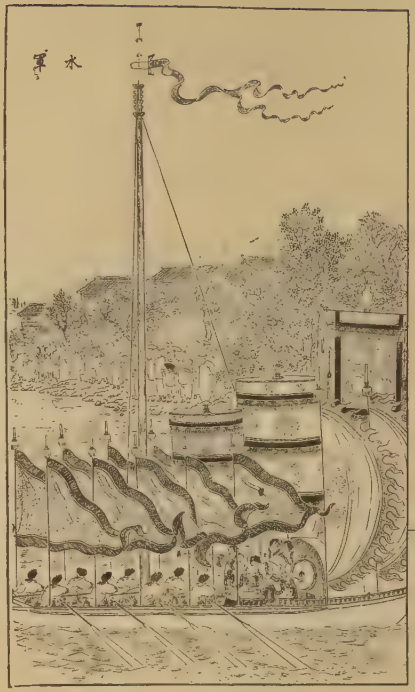
and agents, called *Wei-yuen*, over the province; and even prefects and intendants despatch their messengers. All these functionaries, during the time of their mission, take rank with the highest officers according to the quality of their employers; but the imperial commissioners, who for one object or another are constantly passing and repassing through the Empire in every direction, exercise great influence in the government, and are powerful agents in the hands of the Emperor for keeping his pro-consuls at their duty."

It has already been mentioned that no civil official above a certain rank may serve in the province of his nativity, and it may be here added that an official is forbidden to own land in the district under his control or to have any near relative serving under him, neither is he continued in the same locality for more than three or four years, as a general rule. There is also a system of espionage which, though its ultimate effects are demoralising, imposes a temporary restraint upon vicious practices. Another notable feature is that a triennial catalogue, showing the merits and defects of every official in the Empire, from a *Chih-hien* upwards, is compiled and submitted for imperial inspection by the Board of Civil Office. In order to obtain material for this catalogue, all officials have to report upon the character and qualifications of their subordinates, and also to act as self-accusers when occasion requires. It is a fact that very few officials have ever risen to

high position in China without suffering occasional degradations *en route*, not only because of this system of minute reports, but also because the functions nominally assigned to each public servant are so multitudinous that failure at some points is almost inevitable. Such degradations, when they involve only one or two steps of rank, do not carry with them any disgrace or constitute any bar to subsequent promotion. The degree of an offence, not the moral guilt, is primarily considered. If a man has been guilty of bribery, his punishment is in proportion to the amount of the bribe, and whether he has committed a crime, or erred in judgment, or been deficient in zeal, he is liable to be sentenced to a beating with the bamboo, commuted, of course, to a fine in the case of an aged or exalted official. Moral guilt, in short, is of less importance than its effects. On the other hand, though oppression, extortion, venality, and corruption are freely and almost universally charged against Chinese officials by the foreign critic, it is too often forgotten that none of these men are fully paid agents of their employer, the Government. They are expected to eke out their wholly insufficient stipends by levying commissions upon the business that passes through their hands, and if their license is large, their responsibilities are proportionately heavy. The people, too, are tolerably happy and contented under their sway. As a general rule, so long as a man avoids collision with the law, he

has nothing to fear from its myrmidons, and so long as he lives at peace with his neighbours, officialdom does not obtrude itself into his existence. It has been well said that the doings of Chinese officials are harmless compared with those of old Rome, or of Europe four or five centuries ago; that "to the honour of the Chinese, life is seldom sacrificed for political crime or envious emulation," and that an official need not dread either a bowstring from his lord paramount or the dagger of an assassin hired by a vindictive competitor. What is further certain is that quite a large proportion of Chinese officials really strive to rule equitably and justly, and to discharge the duties of their office in the manner most conducive to the people's happiness and their own credit. The contemporary and past history of the country abounds with the names of such men; it has always been noted that virtuous and conscientious officials obtain not only promotion but also esteem, and the testimony of Occidental observers, who have enjoyed opportunities of judging, is that the statesmen they encountered in Peking and in the Provinces commanded respect for shrewdness, skill, and loyalty. Public testimony also is not wanting. There is no nominal system of popular representation, but the people have provided a means of making their views felt in official circles by posting up pasquinades which are regarded, not as mere vulgar lampoons, but as sober expressions of opinion,

and frequently furnish as clear an appreciation of an official's qualities as can be found in the columns of Western newspapers. The genuine feeling that often pervades these documents and the unquestionably sympathetic relations that plainly exist between many local officials and the people within their jurisdiction, have a value not to be ignored. It is probably true that the average Western critic has neither means nor disposition to see anything beyond the salient blemishes of an Eastern system, and that even features which the customs of his own country should have made familiar are distorted by prejudice when observed in an alien land. Thus the Chinese Emperor's habit of making public confession of his own faults and attributing to them the responsibility for some natural calamity, such as drought, inundation, or pestilence, has often been ridiculed by European writers and called a flagrant example of Oriental insincerity. They forget that in thus acting the sovereign merely humbles himself before heaven, precisely after the manner prescribed by Christianity. So, too, when officials accuse themselves of offences and ask for punishment, as not infrequently happens, the foreign comment is that these confessions are merely intended to divert attention from really serious misdeeds. Yet the Chinese offer an altogether rational and credible explanation, namely, that apart from the hypothesis of sincere regret, there may be a less noble, but still not



A CEREMONIAL BOAT.

A PARADE OF PRISONERS.

ignoble, desire to mitigate faults by acknowledging them.

Official edicts are usually printed in large ideographs and posted at the entrance of an office or in the streets. The *Official Gazette* is also used for this purpose. Sometimes tablets of black marble receive handsomely sculptured copies of laws or regulations and are set up in public positions, to be "held in everlasting remembrance." The eminently practical Chinese administrator or legislator takes care to couch all statutes or proclamations in simple language, easily intelligible; a method contrasting favourably with that adopted in Japan, where imperial rescripts and ordinances are composed in such an erudite style as to be incomprehensible to any but the learned few. It is further characteristic of Chinese edicts that they not only require the obedience but also appeal to the reason of those they address. Unlike the sternly simple vetoes and injunctions of Mosaic Law, they seek to secure intelligent rather than blind observance. This, too, has been ridiculed by foreign critics, and construed as indicating weakness on the part of rulers who argue and command in the same breath. Yet it is strictly consistent with the paternal theory of government in China. As the son of heaven the sovereign receives administrative instruction not less than authority from the divine source, and as the father of the people his mandates inform while they command. Further, it is logically con-

tended by Chinese publicists that since an edict or a statute is addressed to the learned as well as to the illiterate, it should appeal at once to the intelligence of the former and to the reverence of the latter.

Whatever excuse for official extortion may be furnished by the Chinese system of insufficient salaries, it is plainly a demoralising system. From the moment that "squeezing" is counted legitimate as a means of supplementing inadequate emoluments, the caprices of conscience become the sole limitations of the abuse. It is true that stringent regulations exist for preventing corruption and checking extortion, but they are practically inoperative. Opportunity alone sets the standard of morality. On the other hand, there is no monopoly of peculation. The financial potentialities of every post are familiar by experience or by tradition to those in higher positions, and if any official makes such haste to get rich himself that he forgets to share his gains with his superiors, his career is abruptly cut short. Further, the number of persons that qualify for office at the periodical examinations is so greatly in excess of the number of offices that competition for vacancies becomes a question of buying patronage, and thus while, on the one hand, the statesmen in Peking secure their share of the provincial spoils, on the other, a new necessity to "squeeze" is imposed upon the successful candidate: he has to recoup his initial outlay as well as to collect

satisfactory emoluments. "Clean hands" must be very rare under such circumstances. Yet they do exist, and when the system is justly condemned, the honourable fact that many escape its demoralising effects should not be forgotten.

Chapter III

FINANCE

LIKE all Chinese matters involving reference to statistics, facts about the national revenue and expenditure are difficult to obtain. Great variations appear in the statements of European writers who undertook to discuss the subject between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The earliest estimate, that of a French missionary — Père Trigault, writing in 1587 — put the Central Government's income at twenty millions of taels, or about eight millions sterling, taking the tael at its then value of eight shillings, approximately ; and sixty-eight years later, another authority computed the figure to be five and a half times as large. Then, after a short interval, there appeared estimates the lowest of which was five millions sterling, and the highest (Barrow's in 1796), forty-nine millions. On the whole, however, the consensus was that the revenue actually reaching Peking aggregated from twelve to fifteen millions sterling annually, and that the revenues collected for local purposes totalled about thirty-five millions.

A word must be said here about the manner of expressing these figures. The use of a sterling unit appears convenient at first sight, and certainly does not involve any inaccuracy prior to the appreciation of gold in the nineteenth century. Thus, speaking of revenues or expenditures in bimetallic eras, it is arithmetically a matter of indifference whether sums be expressed in silver taels[1] or in the latter's then unvarying gold equivalent. But after the demonetisation of silver and its consequent *débâcle*, which took place in the second half of the nineteenth century, the choice of an unit demands closer consideration. Gold has, of course, the advantage of stability. Such have been the fluctuations in the sterling value of silver that the tael has fallen from nearly eight shillings to less than three shillings, and a revenue of twenty million taels, which in 1800 represented eight millions sterling, now represents only three millions. Nevertheless to reduce all Chinese figures to a gold basis would be misleading, unless it could be shown that the prices of commodities in terms of silver had risen in China *pari passu* with the fall in the white metal's gold price. That has not been the case, however. China having always been a silver monometallic country, the silver price of labour, which is the true foundation of such calculations, has not appreciated proportionately to the silver price of gold. Indeed, China's virtual insensibility to the economic phenomena

[1] See Appendix, note 10.

of Europe and America bears striking witness to her seclusion. Hence, although the perpetual use of a silver unit introduces a fictitious element into financial statements, recourse to a gold unit would not be less unsatisfactory from some points of view, and, on the whole, the advantage seems to be on the side of adhering throughout to the white metal.

There is no such thing published in China as an annual budget showing the estimated revenue and expenditure for the whole Empire. It may be doubted, indeed, whether anything of the kind is compiled, for in financial matters as well as in administrative each province is virtually independent. Naturally the Board of Revenue in Peking might be expected to discharge the function of preparing a budget as an essential part of the duty of general supervision. It does not do so, however. It confines itself to estimating each year what will be the needs of the imperial Treasury during the next twelvemonth, and it divides that amount among the provinces proportionately to their financial capacities, so that each knows exactly what sum it has to send to the capital. Evidently, in order that the Board's manner of apportioning the provincial burdens may be just, it must obtain information about the condition of the provinces. Such information is furnished by the viceroys or governors, as the case may be, and although the Board has competence to verify their reports by despatching inspectors to examine

the condition of affairs *in loco*, that kind of check is not much applied: the statements of the high provincial authorities are usually accepted without query, for, after all, what concerns the Board is, not to obtain an intimate knowledge of the state of affairs in the provinces, but merely to procure data for assessing their respective contributions to the imperial Treasury. The viceroys and the governors, on their side, are not careful to be too frank about the conditions in their districts, unless there is a tale of financial difficulty to be told, when they neglect no facts calculated to create an impression of impecuniosity.

The provinces have discharged all their duties towards the Central Government when the sums demanded by the latter are sent forward. Thereafter the amount of provincial collections or disbursements is practically unqueried. Theoretically all local expenditures have to be approved by the Board of Revenue in Peking. But the Board having no means of intelligently auditing the accounts submitted to it, passes them as a matter of course. Thus each province virtually enjoys financial autonomy.

As to the manner of collecting the revenue, the only part of the work directly undertaken by agents of the Central Government is that relating to the foreign maritime customs and a few of the old native custom-houses. The rest is all done by agents of the provincial governments to whom the collectors are responsible. Moreover, all collec-

tions, however effected, are paid into the hands of the local officials, and none, with the sole exception of the revenue derived from the maritime customs, is held absolutely at the disposal of Peking.

There being no budget nor any settled accounts, whether for the Empire at large or for each province as a whole, it is impossible to ascertain whether a surplus exists in either case. Prior to the Taeping rebellion, or, at any rate, up to the end of the eighteenth century, there is reason to think that whereas the annual state income amounted to some forty million taels, the disbursements did not exceed thirty millions in normal times, so that a constant surplus accrued, and an accumulated reserve of sixty or seventy million taels was generally in hand. Foreign intercourse had not then begun to lay its burdens upon the country, nor had western civilisation forced the nation to spend a large part of its income upon instruments for destroying life. But it may be safely asserted that neither in central nor in local treasury is there any surplus now. On the contrary, the close of each year sees some demands unsatisfied and, if not carried forward to the next year, doomed to remain unsatisfied. It is presumed that if a province fail to send up the full amount of its assessed quota to Peking, the responsible viceroy or governor is punished. But a plausible excuse is generally accepted, and the Board of Revenue in the capital, taught by long experience, takes care that its de-

STRUCTURE IN SILVER

STREET SCENE IN SHANGHAI.

mands shall include a margin sufficient to cover probable defalcations.

The chief source of revenue is a tax upon land. There is reason to think that this tax produces a smaller income now than it did in former days, but nothing can be confidently asserted on that point. Various official publications furnish information which would be more credible were it less contradictory; but no two of them agree, and the most explicit knowledge deducible from their figures is that during the first half of the nineteenth century the land tax yielded from twenty-nine to thirty-three million taels yearly, whereas now it yields only twenty-five millions. The diminution appears to be attributable to the Taeping and Mohammedan rebellions which, in the middle of the century, laid waste large tracts of land and thus reduced the tax-paying area. Probably these ravages no longer constitute a genuine excuse for exemption, so far as the actual tax-payers are concerned; but they do furnish a plausible pretext for the tax-collectors' failure to satisfy the demands of the central treasury. Peking has no means of accurately checking the provincial returns, and the local officials, whatever be the amount really coming into their hands, take care to preserve in the mind of the Central Government unfavourable notions as to the people's taxable capacity. It may sound incredible, but it is nevertheless true, that even the rate at which the land is assessed for the purposes of this tax is

not clearly known. Foreigners who have enjoyed excellent opportunities of judging, allege that 0.75 tael per acre fairly represents the average tax on good rice land. Now even if one-third of that figure be taken as the general average for all arable land, good and bad included, — in other words, if the assessment be only sevenpence per acre, — the tax should yield a hundred million taels (the area of land under cultivation being 400 millions of acres approximately), whereas the total collection is only one-fourth of that amount.[1]

Out of this land-tax revenue of twenty-five million taels, about eight and a half millions go direct to Peking for the uses of the Central Government, namely, three and a half millions in coin and five millions in kind. Here, however, it must be repeated with increased emphasis that the sum sent to Peking, even when it is collected in coin and forwarded in coin, does not by any means represent the total taken from the people. What the local authorities do is to take not the actual amount requisitioned by Peking, but that amount plus all expenses of collecting, all charges for transmission, and all fees and perquisites sanctioned by custom. To illustrate what is involved in this, Mr. George Jamieson, sometime British Consul-General in Shanghai, and one of the best authorities on such subjects, mentions a case of a junk chartered by a foreigner which, on passing

[1] See Appendix, note 11.

a barrier, was required to pay seven and a half taels by way of toll and to accept a receipt for only four, the legal charge. Remonstrances and investigations elicited the fact that what the barrier officials had to exact was not four taels, but such a sum as would enable them to lay down four taels of the standard weight and purity in Peking, and consequently they were obliged to include in the amount every contingent expense of whatsoever nature. "That," says Mr. Jamieson, "illustrates exactly what is going on all over the Empire. To every tael or picul of rice legally leviable there is added a number of petty charges of the above nature, — meltage fee, allowance for waste, clerk's fees, etc., — till the sum is doubled or more. But there is another and greater mischief, and that is the vicious plan of making every magistrate and every collector a farmer of the revenue. All district magistrates receive about the same salaries and allowances, but everybody knows there is all the difference in the world between one incumbency and another. Each district has a fixed quota which the magistrate must produce by hook or by crook, but beyond that minimum all the rest is practically his own, not to keep exactly, because if he holds a lucrative appointment he is expected to be extra-liberal in his presents to the governor, the literary chancellor, the provincial judge, the treasurer, and so on, not to mention still higher dignitaries, if he wishes to get on. But there is no magistracy

that does not at least make up its limits of taxation and leave something over, while the greater number leave a handsome surplus. To hand this over to the imperial exchequer is about the last thing that any one would think of doing. It is the fund out of which mainly the fortunes of viceroys and commissioners have been built up." Speaking broadly, it seems safe to assert that for every tael shown in the returns as revenue from land tax, at least as much remains in the hands of the provincial officials, or is expended on account of various charges and fees. In other words, the people pay land tax aggregating fifty million taels, out of which twenty-five millions appear in the revenue returns.

The above remarks are specially applicable to the grain which has to be forwarded annually to Peking for the support of the Manchu population. This rice is not paid in kind by the farmers, as might reasonably be supposed. Uniformity of quality, an important consideration, would not be attainable were that method adopted. What happens is that the people are required to pay a monetary commutation (in copper or silver) calculated on the basis of the market price of the grain together with an ample allowance on account of costs of transport and miscellaneous fees, just as has been shown to be the practice with regard to the ordinary land tax collected in money. This commuted amount varies from twice to three times the actual market value of

the rice. Having received the money, the district magistrate (*chih-hien*), who is the responsible tax-collector, either purchases the required quantity of rice in the market at the best rate obtainable — often clearing a large profit on the transaction — and forwards it to the general depot whence it is ultimately sent north by the transport department; or he makes an arrangement with that department to buy the rice in consideration of the receipt of a lump sum. Ultimately the transport department — which is an important branch of the Government, maintaining a large number of officials and employes — becomes responsible for the delivery of the grain in Peking. It is estimated that the total sum collected from the people on account of this grain tax of five million taels is eleven and a half million; that is to say, six and a half millions remain in the hands of local officials and the transport department, while five millions go to Peking. Of course these five millions are included in the twenty-five millions that represent the total collected as land tax.

After the land tax the salt gabelle is one of the most important sources of revenue. The sale of salt in the eighteen provinces and Manchuria is a government monopoly, and has been so ever since the seventh century before Christ, when Kwan Chung, premier of the state of Ts'i (now Shantung), who had already given proof of shrewdness by devising "a kind of lupanar where

trading visitors from neighbouring states were encouraged by 'Babylonian women' to leave their gains behind them," conceived the idea of official monopolies of salt and iron, "based upon an average annual minimum consumption per individual of thirty pounds of salt, and upon the indispensability of ploughshares, axes, pans, knives, and needles." This statesman's estimate of average consumption of salt per head is not borne out by modern calculations, which put the figure at about eight pounds instead of thirty, but his financial acumen is attested by the fact that the monopoly has been maintained ever since his time — now twenty-five centuries ago. The Empire is divided for purposes of salt administration into seven main circuits,[1] each of which has its own source of production and is strictly delimited, the salt in one circuit not being allowed to be sold or transported into another. In districts along the coast the method of production is from sea-water by evaporation and boiling, but in Szchuan and Shansi the salt is obtained from brine found in wells and marshes. In Szchuan alone there are about eight thousand of these artesian wells in existence, only though some five thousand of them are worked. The industry was organised in 1132 A. D., and from the wells, which are very deep, not only brine is obtained, but also unlimited quantities of hydrogen gas, which serves as fuel for treating the salt and is

[1] See Appendix, note 12.

also distributed like coal gas in long pipes. "In wandering over the provinces of Szchuan, Kweichou, and Hupeh," says Mr. E. H. Parker, "I had good opportunities for studying the working of this wonderful industry. In many places the salt, especially when of the hard kind like blocks of stone, is practically small money, and its retail value varies unerringly so many fractions of a farthing per pound according to the freight rates of boats in demand and the number of miles coolies have to walk. A lost traveller could almost grope his way about the country by simply asking the retail price at each village and the next one in any direction. The waste of fuel, of human and beast labour, of time and of patience is of course gigantic, but it might have serious effects upon the popular economy of the province were machinery suddenly introduced, carriage cheapened, and strict honesty incontinently insisted on." No limitations are imposed on the quantity of salt produced in any of the circuits, nor is the mode of production prescribed. The one inflexible rule is that every grain produced must be sold either to government officials who have depots for storage purposes, or to salt-merchants who have purchased warrants conferring the right to supply certain areas of consumption. The cost of production varies greatly. In some places, where simple processes of evaporation are available, the expenditure does not exceed fourpence per cwt.; in others, where boiling has to

be resorted to, nineteen-pence is spent in getting the same quantity. The retail price is, of course, very much higher, being nearly four shillings per cwt. in the seacoast districts — as Fuhkien and Che-kiang — whereas it is nine shillings and six-pence in Szchuan, Anhwei, Kiangsu, etc. Officials of the salt department purchase the salt direct from the producers and sell it to the merchants at a price such as will cover all costs and charges together with the duty. Subsequently it pays *likin*, or transit tax, but that need not occupy attention. "Distribution is undertaken by the salt merchants, a body of men holding warrants from the salt commissioner, a viceroy, or governor. The quantity of salt which ought to pass into consumption annually in each circuit is roughly estimated, and enough warrants are issued to cover that amount, so that each warrant is supposed to be used every year. The warrants are perpetual; that is to say, a warrant once issued may be used over and over again, may be handed down from father to son, or may be transferred to a nominee for value. The possession of one or two salt warrants thus becomes in some places a valuable asset. In Anhui and Kiangsu, for instance, they are now worth some twelve thousand taels each. These warrants entitle the holder to buy at the government stores a specified amount of salt, which he may then convey to any part of the circuit. But he must not sell direct to the consumer. Having pur-

chased at an officially fixed price, so he must sell through an agent of the salt government, which fixes the selling price also. The merchant, having chosen the place where he wishes his salt to be disposed of, must enter it at a sort of bonded warehouse, which is established in every town of importance, under the charge of a deputy appointed by the salt commissioner of the circuit. The salt is stored there under the control of the deputy to await its term for sale. For this purpose the merchants' names are entered in a book in order of application, and the salt is strictly disposed of in the same order. The warrants are handed in at the same time, and are retained by the deputy till the salt they cover is all cleared, when they are handed back, and the merchant is at liberty to try a new venture. Each warrant thus follows the other in order of rotation, and the only advantage one merchant can gain over another is in choice of locality for disposing of his salt. The object of every one, of course, is to get the salt into circulation quickly. The sooner it is sold, the sooner does he get his money and his warrant back, and the sooner he is ready to apply for a new issue. If he can use his warrant once in a year or once in nine months, his profits are naturally double what they would be if he could only use it once in two years or eighteen months." The number of warrants in circulation is seldom increased by the issue of new ones. Thus to ob-

tain a share in the business, the only resource is to buy a warrant from some one already in possession. In good times and when the warrants can be used rapidly, the warrant-holder realises a profit of from twenty to twenty-five per cent.

The yield of the salt gabelle, including the transit tax levied on the commodity, is estimated by the most recent authorities at 13½ million taels approximately. But it seems probable that this figure, like the land tax, does not by any means represent the total actually collected. Even from the one item of transit dues (*likin*) a much greater return than 13½ million taels must be obtained. For since the consumption of salt throughout the Empire is estimated at 25 millions of piculs (1 picul = 113⅓ lbs.) and the transit duty — in some of the chief circuits, at any rate — is 1.13 taels per picul, the revenue from *likin* alone should be 28¼ million taels. Mr. Consul-General Jamieson further alleges that the squeezes paid by a warrant holder to the officials are 0.40 taels per picul, which means an aggregate of 10 million taels on 25 million piculs, and thus *likin* and squeezes give a total of 38¼ million taels, to which the Government's profits on the monopoly have to be added. Thus, as is usual in dealing with Chinese revenue returns, bewilderment results from any attempt to form accurate ideas.

No form of Chinese impost has inspired so much discussion in the Occident as *likin*. The term literally signifies "millage;" that is to say,

so many parts out of a thousand.[1] *Likin* is certainly not one of the ancient institutions of China, though there are some evidences that a cognate tax was imposed in old times. It is generally regarded as an impost of modern origin, having been first levied in 1852, when, owing to the great expenditures incurred in dealing with the Taeping rebellion, and owing to the reduced yield of land tax caused by the rebels' devastations, it became necessary to devise some new source of income. The then governor of Shantung, Li Hwei, seems to have conceived the idea of *likin* (or *litôu*, as he called it), but an organisation capable of collecting it profitably was not devised until 1854. That organisation consisted of a central bureau and several subordinate stations at all the large towns and at points along the main routes, whether by land or by water. The number of these stations depends upon the amount of trade in the district. Along the lower parts of the Grand Canal the stations are about twenty miles apart, but elsewhere they are not so numerous. Goods passing any of these stations have to pay a per-millage of their value, and if they have several stations they pay several times, until the payments aggregate a certain maximum. It will thus be seen that *likin* is, in fact, transit duty. There is a tariff of charges, but it receives little attention. What happens in practice is that the owner of the merchandise strikes the best

[1] See Appendix, note 13.

bargain he can effect with the officials of the station, supplementing the agreement with a *douceur* (called "tea-money"). Regular traders, or guilds of traders, often commute for a lump sum which covers a whole voyage or a whole season. Apparently — it is necessary to avoid positive assertions, for the Chinese withhold all definite information — apparently goods have to pay alternately three and two per cent at successive barriers until four are passed, by which time ten per cent has been defrayed, and thereafter free passage is granted for the rest of the province. But if the goods are transported into another province, the exactions begin again. In actual practice, however, things are not so bad as these figures indicate. Merchants save themselves by bargaining. The *likin* stations will often underbid each other to secure business, and where more than one route is available owners of goods obtain easier terms. A hundred bales or piculs are thus passed as eighty, sixty, or, it may be, fifty. Nevertheless the tax is a grievous check to business, and there is evidence that the Chinese authorities originally imposed it reluctantly. They called it an "unfortunate necessity," and they warned the local officials not to allow any "undue harassing" of traders.[1] In such an obnoxious light is *likin* viewed by foreign merchants engaged in Chinese commerce that they often speak of it as an illegal "squeeze" exacted by the local official

[1] See Appendix, note 14.

for his own profit. Illegal, however, it certainly is not, for it has the sanction of imperial decrees, though a more inexpedient impost in the interests of trade could scarcely be conceived. Whether it can be called illegal when imposed on goods imported from abroad by foreign merchants, or on Chinese produce or manufactures destined for export by foreign merchants, is a point more difficult to decide conclusively. The earliest treaty (that of Nanking in 1842) provided that after British merchandise had "once paid the regulated customs and dues" at any of the open ports "such merchandise might be conveyed by Chinese merchants to any province or city in the interior of the Empire of China on paying a further amount as transit duty which should not exceed 2½ per cent on the tariff value of such goods." It cannot be reasonably doubted that the intention of the framers of the treaty was to exempt British merchandise from all additional dues on its way into the interior of the country. Subsequently the provision was made still clearer by the second treaty (that of Tientsin in 1858), where not only the case of imports but also that of exports was disposed of, and it was added that "no further duty" should be levied on merchandise which had received a transit certificate. But *likin* did not exist in 1842; it was first imposed in 1853. Therefore the question assumed this form: Was *likin* a tax of such a nature as to be included in the "further duties"

against which certified merchandise was guaranteed by the treaty? The Chinese authorities appear to have been inclined originally to answer in the affirmative. They could not hide from themselves that, in spite of its name, *likin* was nothing more or less than a transit duty, and therefore not properly leviable upon goods which had obtained a certificate. The records go to show that they hesitated for some time to impose it, and that they could probably have been deterred permanently had the Treaty Powers offered resolute resistance. But that is just what the Treaty Powers did not do. There were found British officials in high places who contended that as the establishment of an imperial customs system under foreign supervision — which was one of the innovations consequent upon foreign intercourse — materially interfered with the development of native customs collectorates and thus deprived the local officials of an important source of revenue, Chinese expedients to provide compensatory income ought not to be vetoed. The British Government itself, too, adopted a view favourable to China. It read the treaties as providing that foreign produce might be placed at any specified place in the interior of the country for purposes of equal competition with similar Chinese produce, on payment of a transit duty of 2½ per cent in addition to the import duty, but that there was no provision to prevent the Chinese authorities from imposing on foreign and Chinese

goods alike whatever general municipal taxes were leviable upon the latter. In short, the British Government regarded *likin* as a municipal tax, and therefore excluded it from the scope of the treaties so long as it did not constitute a discrimination against foreign goods in favour of native. Other Western Powers declined to endorse that benevolent interpretation of the treaties, and the great majority of the foreign merchants doing business with China refused to endorse it, their views being partially influenced by a conviction, founded on practical experience, that the development of Chinese commerce, whether domestic or foreign, was fatally checked by the *likin* system. On the other hand they were equally convinced that to abolish *likin* was beyond the strength of the Chinese Government, and that no promise obtained from Peking in that sense could be implemented in the face of provincial opposition. There were solid reasons to be sceptical. For when, in deference to untiring pressure and remonstrance from the foreign representatives, transit certificates, as provided by the treaties, began to have practical efficacy, the Chinese local officials quickly showed themselves equal to the occasion by reviving an impost called *loti shui*, which signifies either a grower's tax or a terminal tax, and is levied upon goods either before their transit has commenced or after it has terminated, thus hitting both exports and imports. The convenient fiction is that since the transit

certificate gives exemption against transit dues only, it cannot cover goods before or after transit. Confronted by such manœuvres the foreign merchant feels persuaded that Chinese local officials would always find a means of evading any engagement made by the Central Government for the abolition of *likin*, and that the Central Government has no power to impose its will upon them. It must be confessed, however, that this distrust existed long before the *loti-shui* object lesson. It existed in 1869 and it existed in 1876. It showed itself then in the form of an inveterate objection to any treaty stipulation commuting transit dues for a fixed increase of customs duties, and it shows itself equally to-day by refusing to endorse the following proposal, formulated by British commissioners for revising the commercial treaty and endorsed by the chief local officials of China — the viceroys and the governors: —

> To abolish throughout the Chinese Empire all internal taxation of whatsoever kind or description, whether imperial, provincial, local, or municipal, on merchandise and products, whether native or foreign, whether for import, export, or for consumption within the Empire, and the Chinese Government engages that all offices and stations of every kind and description for the levying of taxation on merchandise, except the Imperial Maritime Customs and land-frontier Custom Houses, shall be permanently abolished.

In return for which wholesale reform, a reform of incalculable benefit to China's commerce, the

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British Government would sanction the addition of ten per cent to the customs duties, the proceeds (19 million taels approximately) to go to the Chinese local officials, provided that such additional duty would at once cease to be leviable should the stipulated abolition be not strictly adhered to in spirit as well as in letter. It is possible that before this volume sees the light the above sweeping change may become an accomplished fact, for assuredly such a project ought not to be wrecked on a rock of vague distrust. In 1885 an analogous arrangement was made on a small scale. It was agreed that foreign opium — which had never been included in the transit-pass system — should be exempted from *likin* in consideration of a commuted payment of 80 taels per picul at the port of entry. Amid universal scepticism as to its probable validity that agreement was faithfully implemented by the Chinese, and the fact ought to weigh with the doubters to-day, especially since the proposed arrangement is guaranteed by a radical reservation. But the truth is that Chinese Officialdom has acquired a bad international reputation, not altogether deservedly perhaps, and the average treaty-port resident views with profound suspicion any compact which depends upon Chinese good faith for its fulfilment.

It is estimated that the collection of *likin* throughout the Chinese Empire aggregates 13 million taels annually. But from what has been

said above the certainty will be at once apparent that a great discrepancy exists between the sum shown in the official returns and the sum actually collected by officials.

The foreign trade of China contributes a large amount to the State's income, and this appears to be the sole item of revenue that flows into the imperial Exchequer without leakage *en route*. Originally the latter statement could not have been made: it became true only from the time when the business of collecting the customs duties was entrusted to foreigners. That arrangement had its beginnings, not in any deliberate choice on the part of the Chinese authorities, but in circumstances over which they exercised no control; namely, the occupation of the native city of Shanghai by the Taeping rebels (1853—1855). During the resulting interval of disturbance the task of collecting the duties was temporarily entrusted to three foreign officials deputed at first by the consuls of England, France, and America, and appointed subsequently by the Viceroy at Nanking, who held the post of Imperial Commissioner for Foreign Trade. Things remained thus until the conclusion of the Tientsin Treaty in 1858, the operations of the foreign collectorate being confined to the single port of Shanghai. But at that date, the Chinese Government having contracted new liability for war indemnities, and having agreed to pay them out of the customs duties, the machinery for collecting

the latter acquired special interest in foreign eyes, and its maintenance became a matter of international concern. Further, the Tientsin Treaty contained provisions for an uniform system of duty collection at all the open ports, thus facilitating the organisation of a customs service under the direct control of the Central Government and the latter, taught by the success that had marked the operations of the foreign collectorate in Shanghai, placed the new service under a foreign inspector-general with a foreign commissioner at each port and a large staff of foreign employés. As for the work subsequently done by this customs service, it will be enough to quote here the appreciation of a recent writer:[1] "For the first time in history a true account was rendered to the Imperial Government, accompanied by a substantial revenue on which it could depend. Naturally the agency, though foreign, which yielded such tangible fruit, commended itself to the statesmen of the capital, who frankly recognised, as did the provincial authorities themselves, that the result obtained was wholly beyond the competence of any native organisation."

It would be incorrect, however, to conclude that the service was altogether organised by the Peking Government, for the actual work of collecting was done by ordinary provincial officials, the function of the foreign commissioner being to see that the duties were paid and receipts given

[1] See Appendix, note 15.

before vessels cleared. The collectors being members of the Provincial Government, "made their returns, not direct to Peking, but to the governor or viceroy of the province where the port was situated, who in turn reported to the Board of Revenue in the same way as he reported any ordinary branch of his receipts. Conversely, all orders as to apportionment or paying out the money came first to the governor, who again passed them on to the customs treasurer." So that in theory the customs revenue of a port might be classed as part of the revenue of the province in which it was situated. Practically, however, the governors never looked upon the customs revenue as falling within their control, and although a considerable portion did come in aid of certain provincial expenditures, it was by virtue of the specific authority of the Board of Revenue (in Peking) and not as a right. Formerly the general method of dealing with the customs revenue was that four-tenths were appropriated direct by the Peking Government and the remainder devoted to various purposes, as the support of foreign legations, the expenditures of the Naval Board, the lighting and defence of the coasts, etc. But practically the whole collection is now required for the service of the foreign debt. It amounts to 23 millions of taels, approximately, and it will be increased to about 26 millions when arrangements, already in progress, have been completed for raising

the general tariff rate on imports to an effective five per cent.

Another source of revenue is the native customs. The foreign maritime customs, described above, take cognisance of cargoes carried in ships of foreign build only, — whether foreign-owned or Chinese, — the vast quantities of goods transported by junks being under the control of native custom-houses, situated at many places on the coast and in inland waters. Some of the richest of these collectorates are given by the Court in Peking to Manchu nominees, but with the exception of Canton all are managed through the local authorities and all render their returns in the usual way. The total sum thus collected is officially shown as four million taels annually. Obviously that amount represents only a fraction of the actual revenue. Considering the immense area of China and the vast fleet of junks plying on her littoral and inland waters, it is an idle jest to pretend that the customs duties paid by them aggregate only four million taels. Speaking of Shanghai in this context, Mr. Consul-General Jamieson says: "It needs but a glance at the forest of masts that line the banks of the river to show that the native junk traffic is still of very considerable proportions. Many of the boats, too, are of large size, carrying eight thousand to ten thousand piculs (say five hundred to six hundred tons dead weight). They bring cargoes of native produce from Newchwang, Shantung, and Foochow,

and although they do not make many trips during the year, the aggregate of their cargoes must be very great. To say that the total duties for the year only amounts to 33,000 taels is altogether too ridiculous. Such a sum must represent more nearly a week's collection than a year's." In truth, there can be no doubt that, like all other constituents of the national revenue which are under Chinese control, the nominal yield of the native customs is only a small fraction of what it would be were the administration honest.

It has been already noted that in 1885 a treaty between Great Britain and China provided that foreign opium, in addition to import duty of 30 taels per picul, should thenceforth pay, at the port of entry, a sum of 80 taels per picul in commutation of all subsequent charges in the shape of *likin*, etc. The proceeds of these imposts, aggregating between six and seven million taels annually, were ultimately assigned to meet the requirements of the Admiralty Board in Peking. Simultaneously with the introduction of the above system, orders were issued to the provincial authorities that the duties and *likin* on native opium should be shown in a special return and should not be used for provincial purposes. Wide areas in China are devoted to the cultivation of the poppy. In 1881 a competent observer estimated that the production of opium in the southwestern parts of the Empire amounted to 224,000 piculs, which, were it taxed in the same *ad valorem* proportion as

foreign opium, — say 60 taels per picul against 110 taels for the foreign drug, — would produce a revenue of over 13 million taels, whereas the sum officially reported is only one million. If to this be added the production in other parts of the Empire — and it should be observed that the cultivation of the poppy is steadily spreading — the estimate is that a total revenue of at least from 15 to 18 million taels would be obtained. Yet the official figure is only 2¾ millions. Here, too, the leakage is evidently very great.

There are minor sources of revenue, which may be classed as miscellaneous, — for example, land-transfer fees (three per cent on the value of the land), pawnbrokers' fees, trade licenses, etc., — and there are items of extraordinary revenue, such as sales of titles and official ranks — which operations sometimes produce as much as from three to four million taels annually — and subscriptions or benevolences which wealthy men are occasionally required to pay on occasions of national emergency. This extraordinary income must evidently be excluded from any normal estimate, and having excluded it the proceeds of the various sources enumerated above take the following form: —

	Million Taels.
Land Tax	25
Grain Tax	7½
Salt Gabelle	13½
Likin	13
Foreign Maritime Customs	26
Native Customs	4

	Million Taels.
Subsidies from special provinces	9
Duty and *likin* on native opium	2¾
Miscellaneous	5
Total	105¾

Enough has already been said as to the elasticity of the above figures, supposing that the administration were placed on what in the Occident would be termed an honest basis. India, for example, pays a land tax of 100 million taels and a salt tax of 33 millions, or a total of 133 millions, against a corresponding figure of 45 millions in China. The general *likin* item, again, were commutation effected on the basis of an additional ten per cent to the customs tariff, would be changed from 13 to 19 millions; the native customs ought to yield easily 8 millions instead of 4, and the duty and *likin* on domestic opium should be at least 15 millions in *lieu* of 2¾; so that from these three sources the return should be 42 millions, not 19¾. Altogether there is no difficulty in supposing that China's revenue might be over 200 million taels instead of 105 millions. Japan with her population of 42 millions and her arable area of only 13 millions of acres, pays without any difficulty a sum of 140 millions of taels annually to the State, exclusive of local taxes, whereas China, with a population of 420 millions and an arable area of 400 million acres, pays only 106 million taels inclusive of local taxes.

Turning now to expenditures, it is to be noted, in the first place, that out of a total nominal collection of 105¾ million taels, only 19½ millions

go to Peking to pay the outlays on account of metropolitan administration, Manchu garrisons, and the Imperial Household. The singular conservatism of the Government is shown by the fact that no modification is ever effected in the costly and clumsy system followed when transmitting money from the provinces to the capital. Whether in specie or in bills, the money has to be accompanied all the way to Peking by two expectant officials, and the consequence is that the expense of transmission amounts to from one to two per cent of the total. Speaking generally, very little trustworthy information is obtainable about state expenditures in China. The following account used to be accepted as fairly accurate, but, as will presently be shown, it requires modifications: —

	Taels.
Peking Government (including support of Manchu garrisons and Imperial Household)	19½ millions.
Defence of Manchuria	1¾ ,,
Defence of Central Asia and Kansuh province . .	4¾ ,,
Aids (administrative and military) to the three southwestern provinces, Kwangsi, Kweichow, and Yunnan	1½ ,,
Customs Administration	2½ ,,
Provincial expenditures (administrative and military)	36¼ ,,
	66¼ millions.

Out of the difference — 39½ million taels — between this total and the aggregate revenue of 105¾ millions, a sum of 10 millions ought to be equally divided between the Naval Board in Peking and the Southern Naval Squadron; a sum of 8 millions, allotted for forts, guns, coast defence,

and foreign-drilled troops, and a sum of 2 millions for public works (including the Yellow River embankment, etc.). But such appropriations have now to be reduced in the face of the indebtedness contracted by China on account of various loans floated abroad to pay for public works or to discharge the indemnity exacted by Japan in 1895. Of these loans ten were contracted between 1887 and 1898, their total amount being 61½ million pounds sterling[1] in round numbers, and the whole will be paid off, according to the present programme, by the year 1949. In addition to these debts she became liable for an indemnity of 450 million taels to the various Powers with whom she fought — or, to speak more accurately, who fought with her — in the sequel of the Boxer uprising of 1900, so that the annual charges upon her revenue on account of the service of her foreign loans and her latest indemnity are altogether 41 million taels, approximately. It has been a matter of some perplexity to find means of defraying such a sum, but the task has been achieved by diverting to the central treasury moneys previously appropriated to defray local expenditures — notably the proceeds of the salt gabelle and the native customs — and inasmuch as the provincial officials are adopting measures to compensate this loss by fresh exactions, a sense of keen dissatisfaction is growing throughout the country.

[1] See Appendix, note 16.

This necessarily imperfect statement of Chinese finance may be supplemented by a quotation from Mr. E. H. Parker's "China": —

Things would not be so very bad, in spite of parlous times, if all the receipts were paid, in one currency, into one central chest or account (as the foreign customs are); and if all payments were drawn in one currency from this one chest and remitted in one way. But, in the first place, all provinces have two main currencies of pure silver (several "touches") and copper cash (several qualities), the relation between which differs in each town every day. Besides this each province has its own "touch" and "weight" of a silver ounce; and some provinces use dollars chopped and unchopped, by weight and by piece, as well as pure silver; and the dollar exchange varies daily locally and centrally in regard to both copper cash and silver. Even this difficulty, which involves an enormous waste of time and energy, and opens the door to innumerable and inscrutable "squeezes," might be philosophically ignored if receipts and disbursements were lumped in one account, — if the venous blood were allowed a free course to the heart, and the arterial blood a clean run back to the extremities. But the Board of Revenue, which is as corrupt and conservative as the provinces, goes about its business in a very hand-to-mouth, rough-and-tumble sort of way. . . . Then each viceroy or governor disputes every new demand, and it is quite understood that some appropriations are intended to be more serious than others. Some simpleton of an honest man from time to time throws everything out of gear by allowing a truth to escape: the Board never lets a "flat" of this sort score in fact, even though he appear to do so in principle. A governor cannot be expected to show zeal for Yunnan copper when he knows that the

high officer in special charge is making a fortune out of it. . . . There are other absurd results of this rule-of-thumb system. Province *A* receives subsidies from province *B*, but itself, owing others to province *C*, pays *B* on behalf of *C*. Thus there are two freights to pay and two losses on exchange. Sometimes *A* may be directed even to pay a subsidy to a province *B* which already pays one to province *A*. Funds which might easily be sent by draft are usually despatched in hollowed-out logs of wood, with a guard of soldiers as escort, accompanied by carts, fighting "bullies," and a commissioned officer. Even when sent by draft, there is a charge of two or three per cent for remitting, and a commissioned officer is sent to carry the draft. It is pathetic to read the account of hundreds of coolies trotting all the way to Shanghai from Shansi with heavy logs of wood containing silver wherewith to repay the interest on European loans. The extraordinary care and punctuality exacted in matters of form, duty, or national honour are only equalled by the shameless peculation and callow waste of time and money which prevail in personal matters connected with the performance of the same public duty. Officers of high rank, who are known to make thirty thousand or forty thousand taels a year out of their posts, gravely work out their balances to the thousand-millionth part of an ounce, forgetting that (even if the clerk's salary were only sixpence a day) the time occupied in counting and subtracting each line of figures would cover, ten thousand times over, the clerk's salary rate per minute. In a word, the whole Chinese financial system is rotten to the core, childish and incompetent, and should be swept away root and branch. Until there is a fixed currency, an European accountancy in all departments, and a system of definite sufficient salaries, all reform is hopeless to look for.

Chapter IV

FOREIGN TRADE AND INTERCOURSE: EARLY PERIOD

THE enterprise and integrity of the Chinese merchant have become proverbial, and have been eulogised by writer after writer in strong terms, — exaggerated eulogies in some cases, perhaps, but at all events sufficiently unanimous, to place the main fact beyond doubt. From the beginning of the nineteenth century clear testimony on this point was recorded by foreigners doing business in Canton, and was soon supplemented by convincing facts. At first all commercial transactions of foreigners with China were conducted through a syndicate of native firms, known as the Hong [1] Merchants, who, in return for the privilege of monopolising this business, became security to the local officials for the payment of duties on the trade and for the good behaviour of the foreign traders. The system worked well in some respects, but it presented also some very irksome features, especially as interposing an effectual barrier to direct intercourse between foreign and

[1] See Appendix, note 17.

native officials. It is evident, however, that something of the kind was virtually essential in the early days when the foreigner, having no facilities for reaching the Chinese producer or consumer, must have descended to fortuitous retail transactions in the immediate vicinity of his warehouses had not the Chinese syndicate undertaken the functions of supplying him with exports and disposing of his imports. Thus on the abolition of this Hong system by treaty (in 1842) a void was created that had to be filled at once. The foreign official, on the one hand, no longer found the Hong Syndicate interposing between him and the Chinese Government, but, on the other, the foreign merchant found that the bridge between him and his Chinese clients had disappeared. Into this breach the "comprador" stepped. "Comprador" is not a Chinese term: it is derived from the Portuguese word *comprar* (to buy), and it was originally used to designate the Chinese agent through whose instrumentality foreign merchants effected their sales and purchases. There is no more remarkable figure in the history of commerce than this comprador. Serving aliens whom his nationals regarded with aversion, shared doubtless by himself though in a lesser degree, he nevertheless discharged duties of large trust with almost uniform fidelity, and in his business transactions behaved toward these strangers so as to win their unlimited confidence, their esteem, and even their

friendship. A recent writer, whose long and intimate acquaintance with commercial affairs in China lends great weight to his verdict, says: "The comprador was always consulted, and if the employer ventured to omit this formality the resulting transaction would almost invariably come to grief through inexplicable causes. Seldom, however, was his advice rejected, while many of the largest operations were of his initiation. Unlimited confidence was the rule on both sides, which often took the concrete form of considerable indebtedness, now on the one side, now on the other, and was regularly shown in the despatch of large amounts of specie into the far interior of the country for the purchase of tea and silk in the districts of their growth. For many years the old practice was followed of contracting for produce as soon as marketable, and sometimes even before. During three or four months, in the case of tea, large funds belonging to foreign merchants were in the hands of native agents far beyond the reach of the owners, who could exercise no sort of provision over the proceedings of their agents. The funds were in every case returned in the form of produce purchased, which was entered to the foreign merchant at a price arbitrarily fixed by the comprador to cover all expenses. Under such a *règime* it would have needed no great perspicacity, one would imagine, to foretell in which pocket the profits of trading would eventually lodge. As a matter of fact the

comprador generally grew rich at the expense of his employer. All the while the sincerest friendship existed between them, often descending to the second and third generation." It stands, indeed, to the high credit of Chinese commercial morality that such a relationship could possibly have continued without disaster to the foreign merchant, for he placed himself completely in the power of his native agents under circumstances which, were the ordinary motives of mercantile dealings paramount, must have led to his ruin. During recent years there have been, it is true, several cases of defaulting compradors, but they constitute an infinitesimally small fraction of the great body of men who have established a record for upright dealing. "Of all the accomplishments the Chinese nation has acquired during the long millenniums of its history," says Mr. A. Michie, speaking with the experience of thirty years in China, "there is none in which it has attained to such perfect mastery as in the science of buying and selling. The Chinese possess the Jews' passion for exchange. All classes, from the peasant to the prince, think in money, and the instinct of appraisement supplies to them the place of a ready reckoner, continually converting objects and opportunities into cash. Thus surveying mankind and all its achievements with the eye of an auctioneer, invisible note-book in hand, external impressions translate themselves automatically into the language of the market-place,

A VILLAGE STREET IN THE INTERIOR OF CHINA.

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so that it comes as natural to the Chinaman as to the modern American, or to any other commercial people, to reduce all forms of appreciation to the common measure of the dollar. A people imbued with such habits of mind are traders by intuition. If they have much to learn from foreigners, they have also much to teach them; and the fact that at no spot within the vast Empire of China would one fail to find ready-made and eager men of business is a happy augury for the extended intercourse which may be developed in the future, while at the same time it affords the clearest indication of the true avenue to sympathetic relations with the Chinese. In every detail of handling and moving commodities, from the moment they leave the hands of the producer in his garden-patch to the time when they reach the ultimate consumer, perhaps a thousand miles away, the Chinese trader is an expert. Times and seasons have been elaborately mapped out, the clue laid unerringly through labyrinthine currencies, weights, and measures which to the stranger seem a hopeless tangle, and elaborate trade customs evolved appropriate to the requirements of a myriad-sided commerce, until the simplest operation has been invested with a kind of ritual observance, the effect of the whole being to cause the duplex wheels to run both smoothly and swiftly. To crown all, there is to be noted, as the highest condition of successful trade, the evolution of commercial probity,

which, though no monopoly of the Chinese merchants, is one of their distinguishing characteristics. It is that element which, in the generations before the treaties, enabled so large a commerce to be carried on with foreigners without anxiety, without friction, and almost without precaution. It has also led to the happiest personal relations between foreigners and the native traders.

When the business of the season was over contracts were made with the Hong Merchants for the next season. They consisted of teas of certain qualities and kinds, sometimes at fixed prices, sometimes at the prices which should be current at the time of the arrival of the teas. No other record of these transactions was ever made than by each party booking them, no written agreements were drawn up, nothing was sealed or attested. A wilful breach of contract never took place, and as regards quality and quantity the Hong Merchants fulfilled their part with scrupulous honesty and care. ("The Fankwae at Canton." Hunter, 1824.)

The Chinese merchant, moreover, has been always noted for what he himself graphically calls his large-heartedness, which is exemplified by liberality in all his dealings, tenacity as to all that is material, with comparative disregard of trifles, never letting a transaction fall through on account of punctilio, yielding to the prejudices of others wherever it can be done without substantial disadvantage, a 'sweet reasonableness,' if the phrase may be borrowed for such a purpose, which obviates disputation, and the manliness

which does not repine at the consequences of an unfortunate contract. Judicial procedure being an abomination to respectable Chinese, their security in commercial dealings is based as much upon reason, good faith, and non-repudiation as that of Western nations is upon verbal finesse in the construction of contracts." Other writers have endorsed this appreciation, though in soberer language. Thus the Rev. A. H. Smith, for twenty-nine years a missionary in China, says: "If there are any spheres of activity for which the Chinese race appears to be by nature specially fitted, they may be comprehensively classified under the terms production and exchange. A Chinese knows how to make the most of materials which he has, and he knows how to carry the products of his industry to the places where he will be likely to receive the greatest return for his pains. He is ready to go on long journeys, submit to inconveniences and hardships of every kind for long periods together, and do it as a business for the sake of small rewards. He is a producer, and he is an instinctive and highly skilled trader. Yet, for all this, the Chinese do not place a high value upon trade as such. Attention has often been called to the instructive fact that, of the four classes into which they divide the inhabitants of the Central Empire, scholars are named first, farmers second, workmen third, and traders last. Chinese officials have always adopted the tone of lofty contempt for the trading

classes whenever there was any provocation to do so. In the case of the foreigner, who came to the Chinese in the first instance simply and solely as a dealer in goods and as a medium of exchange, there was from the beginning a temptation to do this." Indeed, Chinese history shows that from the earliest times the tradesman was regarded, not as a useful and indispensable element of the body politic, but as a mischievous person who grew fat at his neighbour's expense and interfered to make life hard for the consumer. The founder of the Han dynasty interdicted the use of a silk garment or a carriage by merchants and taxed them heavily, with the definite object of rendering their calling unpopular, and in his era as well as subsequently no trader was eligible for official appointment. In those days, however, the military element ruled the situation, and, "as Mr. E. H. Parker well puts it, the chief subject for commercial speculation was grain for the armies, and the trader of the period seems to have been the same objectionable sort of person as the ubiquitous army-purveyor and commissary so detested by Napoleon during his Italian campaigns." It may be assumed that had militarism continued to be paramount in Chinese society as it was under the earlier dynasties, the merchant, remaining a despised individual, would have failed to develop the high qualities to which so many foreign observers have borne witness. Such, at all events, was the course that social

evolution took in the neighbouring Empire of Japan. There exactly the same fourfold division of the people was adopted — gentleman, farmer, artisan, and trader — and exactly the same ideographs were employed in writing these terms. But although the idea originally informing the classification may have been, and probably was, similar in both countries, a double change occurred in China at some period of her history not definitely marked; the "gentleman," ceasing to be identified as a soldier, became a literatus, and the trader, ceasing to be regarded as a kind of general enemy, whose business was to extort undue gains from his fellow-beings, became a respectable, though not perhaps a highly respected, member of society. It would be most interesting to trace the beginnings and the progress of this revolution of ideas, and to discover how and when it came to pass that education inspired contempt for a military career; that military posts were abandoned to men lacking moral endowment for study, and that the dregs of society alone constituted a proper recruiting ground for professional fighters. History, however, offers little clue to these questions. In Japan no such change occurred. There the soldier retained his pride of place; scholarship ranked merely as a polite accomplishment; contempt for pecuniary gain in any shape headed the list of gentlemanlike characteristics, and the tradesman, himself producing nothing and living

solely by raising prices for others, remained always a despised individual, nor ever developed a commercial conscience.

But although this special aptitude for commerce is predicated of the Chinese, they do not appear to have showed any spirit of tradal enterprise in very early times. The Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and Syrians were conspicuously ahead of them in that respect, and had learned to go far afield in search of markets long before the Chinese conceived any idea of travelling for the sake either of information or of gain. It is shown by ancient annals that these Western peoples carried on an active trade between Alexandria and the East some centuries before Christ, but whether that trade reached China is uncertain, and the interest attaching to the bare fact scarcely seems to justify the discussion it has provoked. What can be asserted with confidence, however, is that, prior to the Christian era — probably as early as the beginning of the second century B. C. — a commerce of appreciable magnitude existed between the Roman Empire and northern China, silk, iron, and furs being carried westward, while glassware, woven stuffs, embroideries, drugs, metals, asbestos, and gems were sent to China. Syria — or "Ta-ts'in," as the Chinese called it — was the origin of this commerce, and Parthia was the half-way house, the transport being entirely overland. A choice of two routes offered from Parthia, one passing

northward of the Celestial Mountains, the other southward, and both converging at Turfan, whence the chief towns of northern China in Shansi and Shensi were reached by a single route through the mountains on the confines of the present Kansuh, — the Pass of Kia-yuh. China up to that time had been divided into two empires, a northern with its metropolis at Hsian, and a southern with its metropolis at Nanking. There is some reason — not quite conclusive, however — to believe that southern China also had tradal relations with the Roman Empire through Burma, but no oversea route had yet been opened, nor does it appear that the northern Chinese possessed any direct knowledge of the Occident beyond Parthia, or the southern Chinese any beyond the confines of Burma. At the close of the second century before the Christian era — by which time the whole Empire of China had passed under one sceptre — there was a considerable access of information, for in the north, Khotan, the Pamirs, and Kokand having been annexed, the Chinese learned the situations of Parthia, Mesopotamia, and even Syria, which widening of their horizon was shortly followed by acquaintance with the Greek dynasties of Bactria and Afghanistan. Practically at the same time (110–109 B. C.) the provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan having been overrun by the armies of northern China and the Empire having acquired a continuous seaboard from Canton to the Gulf

of Chili, an attempt was made to reach India *viâ* Yunnan, but it does not seem to have succeeded. The earliest conclusive evidence of the use of that route is found in the annals of the year 166 A. D., when Marcus Aurelius sent a mission to China through Burma and Yunnan. His reason for seeking access in that direction was that the Parthians, being resolved to retain their monopoly of the overland trade *viâ* Turfan, refused to give passage to Syrian envoys, just as, sixty-eight years previously, they had refused passage westward to a Chinese agent. They imagined that China was practically inaccessible from the south, and that they might themselves occupy the remunerative position of *entrepôt* for all time. The supposition was correct in so far as the almost deterrent difficulties of the Burma route were concerned. But the Parthians omitted from their calculations the possibility of an oversea avenue to southern China, and thus it fell out, towards the close of the second century A. D., that ships from the west began to reach Canton, and commerce was partially deflected to the ocean path in the south from the trans-Asian routes in the north.

The deflection would probably have become complete had not the Empire soon fallen once more into a divided state, lasting nearly four centuries, during which the north and the south were cut off from intercommunication, and each transacted its foreign trade independently of the other. The southern dynasties maintained a brisk commerce

with Ceylon, India, Indo-China, and the other Indian colonies, while the northern sent and received commodities *viâ* Parthia. As yet no restriction whatever was imposed, nor were any duties levied.

In the last quarter of the fifth century the Turks presented themselves on China's northern frontiers as buyers of silk and wadding in exchange for iron articles of their own manufacture, and tea being now added to China exports, her trade acquired new importance. It presented no novel features, however, until the seventh century, when Arab traders, pushing out the Indian colonies in Java, the Malay Peninsula, and Indo-China, opened factories in various places between Persia and the Far East as well as in Canton and other Chinese ports. Thus is presented the first instance of foreigners settling in China for commercial purposes. And now, too, for the first time (middle of seventh century) the records show that duties in the form of tithes were levied in kind upon imports of spices, camphor, and precious woods, an official being stationed at Canton as overseer of foreign trade. The Nestorian Christians of Syria appear also upon the scene about the same time, and were permitted to travel freely throughout China, a fact attested by a tablet — the celebrated Nestorian Stone — found at Hsian. The inscription upon this tablet (dated 781 A. D.) is in Chinese and Syriac characters. It alludes gratefully to the liberal atti-

tude shown towards Christian travellers by the Chinese sovereigns (Tang dynasty, 618–907), and it mentions an imperial edict of 638 A. D. according toleration to the Christian religion. If anything further were needed to illustrate the demeanour of the Chinese towards foreign traders, travellers, and religious propagandists, it is furnished by the fact that at the close of the eighth century four thousand foreign families then living in Hsian, were allowed to settle permanently in China, their homeward route across Asia being barred by Thibetans who had occupied Turkestan. It is notable that shortly before this time the first conspicuous excess was committed by strangers in the Chinese realm when (758 A. D.) a party of Arabs and Persians made a filibustering attack upon Canton, pillaging and burning some warehouses in the city.

The reader may be reminded parenthetically that the topographical conditions existing along the trans-Asian routes to north China were very different two thousand years ago from what they are to-day. This fact has been vividly illustrated by investigations recently undertaken in Chinese Turkestan, which formerly lay on the commercial route between China and the West, and which was freely traversed by Grecian and Roman traders at least two centuries before the Christian era. Excavations now in progress tend to prove that a high state of culture existed among the people of that region, that the art influences of

Greece and Rome were felt there, that Buddhism was the religion of the inhabitants, and that they derived their civilisation from India. But owing apparently to insufficient irrigation, the towns and villages were gradually buried under advancing sands, just as was the case in Egypt, and where gardens, avenues, and orchards once existed there is now only a waste.

It will be seen from what has been recorded above that during the early centuries of the Christian era the Chinese received foreigners hospitably, encouraged their trade, imposed no restrictions on the practice or propagandism of their religions, and, in short, evinced nothing of the conservative, exclusive proclivities for which they ultimately became remarkable. The records do indeed show that about the middle of the third century (A. D.) a rule was enacted prohibiting any stranger from residing in the country unless he brought tribute, but it appears that this veto had its origin in domestic disturbances, and that it ceased to be effective when the occasion which had suggested it no longer existed.

Another interesting fact may be gathered from the records, namely, that travel on the Asiatic continent was not attended with any serious dangers in the early eras. At the beginning of the fifth century (A. D.) a Buddhist monk (Fahhien), setting out from Asia, made his way from the northwest of China to the Indus, thence to the modern Peshawur and Kabul, thence down the

Ganges valley to a place near Calcutta, where he took ship for Ceylon, Java, and finally Kiao-chou — now a German naval base — in Shantung. Two centuries later, Hüanchwang, also a Buddhist pilgrim, made a similar journey, going and returning by land and spending no less than seventeen years *en route*. Other Buddhist devotees in the seventh and eighth centuries — sixty are recorded by name — made the tour to India, some by land and some by sea, and all in obedience to religious fervour which impelled them to study Buddhism at its source in India, just as Japanese priests in the same centuries crossed constantly to China, which they, in turn, regarded as the great fountain-head of the faith.

It has been stated above that in the seventh century Arab traders opened factories in Canton and other Chinese ports, and a record of their presence in Canton still exists in the form of a massive pagoda built in 751. Canton did not then give any promise of the greatness it subsequently attained. It was a small place, and the inhabitants of the region in which it stood were chiefly aborigines. The Arabs did not remain long without competitors. They found the field soon invaded by Persians, who, coming oversea, appear to have excelled the Arabs in tradal energy, and to have considerably extended the area of commercial operations with China. There can be no doubt that during the period (618–907) of the Tang dynasty's vigorous sway both Arabs

and Persians carried on a brisk trade. Customs inspectorates were established at Ningpo, Han-chou (Marco Polo's "Kinsay"), Tsuan-chou (Polo's "Zaitun"), and Kanpu ("Canfu"). This last-named place was only twenty-five miles from Han-chou, of which city it served as the port, the bore in the river preventing ships from lying off Han-chou itself. The importance of the trade carried on at Kanpu may be inferred from an account of its capture and sack in 877, compiled by the Arab traveller Abu Zaid. He declares that on that occasion there were among the people destroyed a hundred and twenty thousand Mohammedans, Jews, Christians, Magians, and Parsees, all engaged in commerce. Another Arab traveller, Ibn Wahab, gives details which show that any one, whether native or foreign, could journey in China in the time of the Tang dynasty, the only proviso being that he must carry two passports, one containing all personal details of himself and his retinue, the other setting forth the nature and quantity of the goods and money in his possession. The object of these passports was, not to restrict the goings and comings of strangers, but "to prevent danger to travellers in their money or goods; for should one suffer loss or die, everything about him is immediately known and he himself or his heirs after his death receive whatever is his." There is also evidence that a system of transit dues, or something very similar, existed, and, in fact, that all

matters relating to foreign trade were carefully regulated. Further, it is established that the route through Yunnan was utilised in that era by Persians, Arabs, and other nations, who sent merchants disguised as ambassadors carrying tribute to the Chinese Emperor, and received from him gifts three or four times the value of the tribute, such munificence being required by His Majesty's dignity. Subsequently the Government adopted measures to verify the authenticity of so-called "tribute-bearers," and it certainly cannot be blamed for protecting itself against manœuvres of the above character. Towards the end of the ninth century, when the Empire lapsed into a state of anarchy preceding the fall of the Tang rulers, the various factories established by foreign traders had to be closed, with the exception of Canton; and throughout the greater part of the tenth century — that is to say, the period separating the fall of the Tang dynasty and the rise of the Sung — merchants from oversea encountered many obstacles owing to the unsettled state of the coast. From the twelfth century, however, they were enabled to prosecute their calling in complete tranquillity, the Government not only extending to them general protection, but also granting special facilities by abolishing all the internal taxing stations. The state of affairs at the beginning of the thirteenth century is thus described by Parker: "The Chinese had acquired a knowledge of the African coast

down to Zanzibar, the Red Sea, and even (to a limited hearsay extent) of Egypt and Sicily. The great centre of Arab trade in the Far East was Sarbaza, or the modern Palembang in Sumatra, between which place and the coasts of Fuhkien Chinese junks plied regularly with the two monsoons, carrying their cargoes of porcelain, silk, camphor, rhubarb, iron, sugar, and precious metals to barter at Palembang for scents, gems, ivory, coral, fine swords, prints, textile fabrics, and other objects from Syria, Arabia, and India. Cochin China joined in this trade as a half-way house, but levied the heavy charge of twenty per cent upon all imports. It is especially stated that there was no foreign trade with the northern part of the peninsula, *i. e.*, what we now call Tonquin." Japan and Riukiu Islands (Loochoo) were also within the circuit of China's oversea commerce, and caravans continued to reach the northern regions of the Empire by the overland routes already described, though during the contests between the Chinese and the Tartars in the twelfth century the former ceased to reap the advantages of this trans-Asian commerce.

These details of China's foreign commerce during the early centuries suffice to indicate her general attitude towards aliens. It is plain that she showed no manner of prejudice against trade with the outer world, whether the traders came oversea or overland. But there would be error in assuming that the traders always received lib-

eral treatment at the hands of Chinese local officials. The celebrated Arab traveller of the ninth century, Ibn Wahab, gives a very unfavourable account of the state of affairs at Kanpu. He describes many unjust dealings with the merchants who traded thither, which had gathered the force of a precedent, and he says "that there was no grievance, no treatment so bad but they exercised it upon the foreigners and the masters of the ships." It is stated by him that in consequence of these official abuses and extortions the port had to be finally forsaken, and the "merchants returned in crowds to Siraz and Oman;" but that is evidently an exaggeration, since, as has been shown above, there were at least 120,000 foreign traders at Kanpu in 877. At all events, Ibn Wahab's statement may be accepted as evidence that Chinese local officialdom in the ninth century had already developed the greedy unscrupulous habits now so familiar.

The treatment extended to foreign religions by the Chinese in early eras merits even more careful attention than their attitude towards foreign trade, for there are cogent reasons to think that the international complications which have already involved China in trouble of extreme gravity and which now threaten to disintegrate her empire, must be attributed in great part to unwise methods of Christian propagandism.

The first religion that reached China from abroad was Judaism. According to their own

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records, which there is no valid reason to doubt, Jews arrived in the Middle Kingdom as early as two hundred years before Christ, that is to say, during the sway of the Han dynasty, and the historical conclusion is that they carried the Pentateuch thither shortly after the Babylonish captivity. They travelled doubtless by the trans-Asian route from Parthia, and are supposed to have established a settlement in Honan about the year A. D. 72. The narratives of Marco Polo, of Ibn Batuta, and of others show that there were Jews[1] in Peking in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but they seem to have lived chiefly in Kaifêng, the capital of Honan, where they erected a synagogue in 1183 A. D. They evidently constituted an appreciable element of the population in the fourteenth century, for the last Mongol ruler of China thought it worth while to solicit their aid together with that of his Mohammedan subjects when the overthrow of his dynasty by the Ming appeared imminent. Had there been an opportunity for either sect to accept the invitation, some interesting developments might have been witnessed. But the children of Zion never made their presence felt in the Middle Kingdom either by religious propagandism, by military prowess, or by a display of the financial qualities[2] that have distinguished them in the Occident since mediæval times. China proved to be the only country in the world where, though not perse-

[1] See Appendix, note 18.

[2] See Appendix, note 19.

cuted in any way, they were unable to preserve their individuality. Pere Gozani, visiting Kaifêng in 1704, found a tolerably flourishing colony with a temple and a synagogue. The former, the "Pure and True Temple," is described as a large establishment consisting of four separate courts and various buildings enclosed for residence, worship, and work. The synagogue is said to have measured sixty feet by forty, its portico having a double row of four columns before it, while in the centre stood the throne of Moses, a magnificent dais with an embroidered cushion, on which the book of the law was placed at reading time. But in 1866, when the Rev. W. A. P. Martin visited Kaifêng, he found no remains of this synagogue or temple, except a solitary stone with an inscription recording the erection of the synagogue in 1183; while of the once numerous colony only three to four hundred remained, their sacred tongue fallen into disuse, their traditions no longer transmitted, their worship neglected, their condition so impoverished that they had been obliged to demolish and sell their holy buildings, and their complete dispersion imminent. But nothing of all this could be ascribed to intolerance on the part of the Chinese. The Jews had lived for eighteen or nineteen hundred years in the midst of the Chinese, practising their religion freely and not discriminated against in any injurious manner by either the central or the local authorities. Bishop Schereschewsky, of

Shanghai, himself a Jew, paid a visit to Kaifêng in recent years, and his inquiries showed that one or two of the Jews had actually become Buddhist priests, that all were ignorant of their own rites and ceremonies, and that they had never translated their sacred books into Chinese, from which it is plain that their efforts to win converts must always have been perfunctory.

Judaism is here mentioned as the earliest alien faith brought under the notice of the Chinese people, but there is some reason to suppose that Buddhism preceded it. The Indian faith, according to some historians, was carried to China in the third century before Christ by priests who showed so much zeal in preaching their creed that they were seized and thrown into jail, whence the legends say that they escaped by the aid of an angel who appeared in the middle of the night and opened their prison doors, — an incident sometimes quoted as constituting one of the many points of resemblance between the records of the two great creeds, that of the Nepaulese and that of the Nazarene. It would seem, therefore, that in those early times the Chinese were not disposed to brook any active invasion by an alien faith, and that their display of repugnance was sufficiently strong to deter any second attempt on the part of the Buddhists. For they are not again heard of in Chinese history until 65 A. D. (61 according to some authorities), when an Emperor (Ming Ti) sent to India for the sacred books and for author-

ised teachers. Concerning this marked departure from the intolerance of the preceding three centuries two explanations are offered. One is that the Emperor having seen in a dream the image of a foreign god, his thoughts turned naturally to India, where the religion of Siddartha could then count its disciples by tens of millions. The other is that Ming's action was prompted by belief in a saying attributed to Confucius: "The people of the West have sages." But Confucius died more than five hundred years before this invitation to the disciples of Buddha, and it has not been explained why a dictum of the great teacher, disregarded through all that long interval, should have suddenly inspired active obedience. The source of the Chinese Emperor's momentous impulse remains, therefore, uncertain.

Under imperial patronage the Indian creed spread quickly among all classes of the Chinese people, and became, before the middle of the fourth century, the chief religion of the nation. Its own liberality must have helped Buddhism to disarm opposition, for its propagandists made no attempt to interfere with the State religion which formed the basis of the country's polity. In China, as at a later era in Japan also, they followed eclectic rather than exclusive lines, and they were further assisted by the fact that Confucianism, the ethical creed permeating China at the time of Buddhism's advent, did not concern itself about the supernatural, and thus presented no obstacle

to the essential tenets of the imported faith. On the whole the welcome given by the Chinese to Buddhism at its second advent cannot be cited with strict propriety as evidence of a tolerant disposition towards alien faiths, for the Indian religion came among them by invitation of their sovereign and remained among them under his protection.

Islamism (called by the Chinese *Hwei-hwei-chiao*) first arrived in China in 628 A. D. (the year of the Mission), when Wahb-Abi-Kabcha, a maternal uncle of Mohammed, was despatched to the court of the great Tang dynasty, a bearer of presents and an expounder of the Arabian creed. Long before that time, as shown above, tradal routes had been established between China and the Indian and Arabian colonies. Wahb-Abi-Kabcha reached Canton by sea, and proceeded thence overland to the capital, which was then at Hsiang in Shensi, a long and arduous journey. He appears to have been hospitably received, and that no obstacles were placed in the way of his propagandism may be confidently inferred from the fact that a mosque was soon afterwards built in Canton, where it still stands. It is called the "Plain Pagoda," and its height is estimated at 165 cubits. Evidently such a monument could not have been erected except in the presence of official tolerance. It would seem, however, that trade occupied the attention of the early Mohammedan settlers rather than religious propagan-

dism; that while they observed the tenets and practised the rites of their faith in China, they did not undertake any strenuous campaign against either Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, or the State creed, and that they constituted a floating rather than a fixed element of the population, coming and going between China and the West by the oversea or the overland routes. According to Giles, the true stock of the present Chinese Mohammedans was a small army of four thousand Arabian soldiers, who, being sent by the Khaleef Abu Giafar in 755 to aid in putting down a rebellion, were subsequently permitted to settle in China, where they married native wives. The numbers of this colony received large accessions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries during the conquests of Genghis, and ultimately the Mohammedans formed an appreciable element of the population, having their own mosques and schools, and observing the rites of their religion, but winning few converts except among the aboriginal tribes, as the Lolos and the Mantsu. Their failure as propagandists is doubtless due to two causes, first, that, according to the inflexible rule of their creed, the Koran might not be translated into Chinese or any other foreign language; secondly and chiefly, that their denunciations of idolatry were as unpalatable to ancestor-worshipping Chinese as were their interdicts against pork and wine. They were never prevented, however, from practising their faith so

long as they obeyed the laws of the land, and the numerous mosques that exist throughout China prove what a large measure of liberty these professors of a strange creed enjoyed. One feature of the mosques is noticeable, however: though distinguished by large arches and by Arabic inscriptions, they are generally constructed and arranged so as to bear some resemblance to Buddhist temples, and they have tablets carrying the customary ascription of reverence to the Emperor of China, — facts suggesting that their builders were not entirely free from a sense of the inexpediency of differentiating the evidences of their religion too conspicuously from those of the popular creed. It has been calculated that in the regions north of the Yangtse the followers of Islam aggregate as many as ten millions, and that eighty thousand are to be found in one of the towns of Szchuan. On the other hand, just as it has been shown above that although the Central Government did not in any way interdict or obstruct the tradal operations of foreigners in early times, the local officials sometimes subjected them to extortion and maltreatment of a grievous and even unendurable nature, so it appears that while as a matter of State policy, full tolerance was extended to the Mohammedan creed, its disciples frequently found themselves the victims of such unjust discrimination at the hand of local officialdom that they were driven to seek redress in rebellion. That, however, did not occur until

the nineteenth century. There is no evidence that, prior to the time of the Great Manchu Emperor Chienlung (1736–1796), Mohammedanism presented any deterrent aspect to the Chinese. That renowned ruler, whose conquests carried his banners to the Pamirs and the Himalayas, did indeed conceive a strong dread of the potentialities of Islamic fanaticism reinforced by disaffection on the part of the aboriginal tribes among whom the faith had many adherents. He is said to have entertained at one time the terrible project of eliminating this source of danger in Shensi and Kansuh by killing every Mussulman found there, but whether he really contemplated an act so foreign to the general character of his procedure is doubtful. The broad fact is that the Central Government of China has never persecuted Mohammedans or discriminated against them. They are allowed to present themselves at the examinations for civil or military appointments, and the successful candidates obtain office as readily as their Chinese competitors.

Concerning the exact time when Christianity became known to the Chinese there is no historical evidence. Some affirm that St. Thomas himself was the apostle; others that later, though still early, propagandists carried the faith thither. What seems certain is that very soon, if not immediately, after the condemnation of Nestorius in Constantinople for the heresy of denying that Mary was the mother of God, some of his dis-

ciples emigrated to China, and found there a home where they could live peacefully and worship freely without fear of official molestation. In 551 A. D. some of these monks returned to Constantinople bearing silk-worm's eggs, and as they had been residents of the Far-Eastern country for many years, it is reasonably conjectured — and the conjecture has the support of independent evidence — that either they or their predecessors arrived in China not later than the beginning of the sixth century. In China the only remaining record of their existence and labours is a monumental stone found at the ancient capital, Hsian in Shensi. This stone, to which reference has already been made, was not discovered until 1625, and an animated discussion ensued as to its origin and authenticity. Ultimately, however, owing mainly to the researches of the brilliant Jesuit priest, Père Havret, in the nineteenth century, sinologues agreed to regard the stone as a genuine relic of early Christianity, though men of such eminence as Voltaire and Renan had insisted on calling it a fraud. Erected in 781 A. D., the stone has an inscription in the Chinese language with Syriac additions. Several translations have been made, each differing more or less from the other, but all agreeing sufficiently to convey a clear idea of the main facts. Special mention is made on the tablet of Father Olopen, who performed the arduous journey across Asia from Mesopotamia in the year 635, bearing "the sacred books,"

and was received on the western border of China by the Emperor's prime minister, sent specially for the purpose, from which fact it may be inferred that the sovereign had already been influenced in favour of the Occidental faith. Thereafter the Bible was translated by the imperial librarians, and the Emperor having read it, issued an edict — the original of which was found by Mr. Alexander Wylie in 1855 — extolling the principles of the new religion as "purely excellent and natural," directing that it be proclaimed throughout the Empire, and ordering that a Syrian church be built in the capital (Chang-an), where twenty-one priests were to officiate, a portrait of the Emperor himself being placed in the church. Still greater favour was shown to the Nestorians by the succeeding sovereign. It is recorded that he "caused illustrious churches to be erected in every province" and that the Christian doctrine "pervaded every channel." But towards the close of the seventh century, under the rule of the celebrated Empress Wu, Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity came into collision, as was not unnatural, and Buddhism triumphed. This episode is dismissed with a very brief reference in the inscription on the tablet, and history is altogether silent about it. Yet there can be no doubt that the Nestorian Church was partially destroyed in Loh-yang — whither the capital had been removed from Chang-an — and that for a time Christianity

forfeited official favour. The opposition of the Buddhists, generally liberal in their attitude towards alien creeds, had probably been disarmed at first by the numerous resemblances between the rites and tenets of the imported faith and their own — such resemblances as that Maya, the mother of Shakyamuni, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, had both conceived immaculately; that in the ceremonials of each religion candles, flowers, vestments, beads, holy water, rubrics and masses for the dead in Purgatory occupied a similar place; that the priests of each faith were obliged to shave their heads and practise celibacy; that both used the sign of the cross, — the Buddhists by folding their robe over the breast in that shape, — and that the first three letters of the name ΙΗΣΟΥΣ formed the principal ideograph in Buddha's name. But history shows that during the Tang dynasty, to which period the record on the Nestorian tablet refers, the Chinese sovereigns differed greatly from each other in their policies towards Buddhism, their attitude being sometimes tolerant, sometimes oppressive, and sometimes patronising; and it was natural that under such circumstances the devotees of the faith should reflect in their own conduct towards rival creeds the excesses of which they were themselves the objects. Christianity, however, did not remain long under a cloud. A subsequent sovereign restored the church in Loh-yang, caused portraits of the first five Tang Emperors to be placed

within the sacred building, and composed motives for wall-tablets. The writer of the Hsiang description — Kingtsing, a priest of the Syrian church — speaking of these pictures, bears incidental testimony to the skill of eighth-century artists; for he says that the portraits were so life-like that their originals seemed to be actually present, their arms appearing as though one could touch the flesh and their foreheads radiating light.

This munificent patronage continued during the reign of two succeeding Emperors, and at the time (781 A. D.) when the tablet was inscribed, the Nestorians seem to have been in a flourishing condition. Sixty-five years later their priests, then numbering no less than three thousand, were ordered to abandon their holy ministrations and retire into private life. But that was not a special discrimination against Christianity. The priests of Buddha received a similar command from the Emperor Wutsung, a puppet of the Palace eunuchs and an enemy of religion in any form. His successor adopted a diametrically opposite policy so far as Buddhism was concerned, and made no attempt to oppress Christianity, which entered a period of renewed vigour, so that when Marco Polo visited China in the thirteenth century, there were Nestorian churches in Hangchou and Chinkiang, and Nestorian residents in many towns throughout the Empire. Unfortunately at this interesting epoch of the

Christians' career history ceases to furnish even the meagre indications hitherto available. With a substantial measure of imperial aid and without any specially powerful rivals, the Nestorians had a fair opportunity of winning a large congregation in China. But they made no permanent mark. Like the Jews they gradually lost their religious vitality and finally perished by absorption into their surroundings. It has been suggested that the spread of Islamism in Asia severed them from intercourse with the mother church and deprived them of its aid so that inanition overtook them. The explanation seems totally inadequate. Christianity cannot be supposed to draw its life blood entirely or even mainly from human sources. Under the Tang dynasty the Nestorians attained a degree of prosperity evidently independent of any assistance or encouragement given by the home church, and moreover it does not appear from history that they lacked either protection or favour under the Khans of Asia. For in 1253, when Friar Rubruk, despatched by Louis XI. of France, reached the camp of Sartaeh, he found there high in authority a Nestorian monk, Cojat; and when the same envoy subsequently made his way to the court of the Grand Khan, Mangu, he had to undergo examination by Nestorian priests before being admitted to audience. Is it necessary to conclude that the Nestorians gradually fell away from their faith, and like their fellow-residents, the Jews,

ultimately took on the colour of their environment, or has history concealed some catastrophe which would offer a less unwelcome explanation? Whatever the truth may be, it is certain that today there remain no ruins of their churches, no traces of their writings, no evidences of their work, material or moral. Nothing tells their story except a solitary stone tablet with an inscription which augments the wonder of their failure instead of accounting for it.

Throughout the course of nearly thirteen centuries no attempt to carry the gospel of Jesus to China was made by Christians of any denomination except the Nestorians, and when at length, in 1246 A.D., communication was opened between Christendom and East-Asian peoples, it was for political rather than religious purposes. Alarmed by the ravages of the Tartars in the regions between the Caspian and the Mediterranean, Pope Innocent sent a Franciscan monk, John of Plano Carpini, to convey a letter of remonstrance to the Grand Khan. The correspondence between the two potentates, though limited to a solitary despatch on each side, forms one of the most interesting pages of history, the language used by the writers being entirely unobscured by the diplomatic insincerities of later ages. His Holiness the Pope couched his despatch in the tone of a superior addressing an inferior. He denounced the outrages committed by the Tartar conquerors; warned them that "by many and

great offences" they had "provoked the wrath of the Divine Majesty," and bade them "make satisfaction by suitable penitence" or they would certainly suffer "the severest temporal punishment." Nothing but a stultifying sense of supereminence could have blinded the Pope to the irritating and mischievous effects of such language. The Grand Khan naturally answered in a cognate strain but with better logic. He told the Pope and all other Christian potentates that if they wanted peace they had better come and ask for it; he said that with regard to the Tartars being baptised and becoming Christians as the Pope declared to be essential, the Tartars failed to understand the necessity; he asserted that if men had been slain it was "because they did not obey the precepts of God and of Genghis Khan;" he opined that if God had not willed these things they could not have happened; and he concluded by observing that although the inhabitants of the West believed themselves alone to be Christians and despised others, "how were they to know on whom God might choose to bestow his favours?" Thus Pope Innocent IV. and Kuyuk Khan, writing to each other in the thirteenth century, forecast exactly the tone destined thenceforth to govern all communications between the West and the Far East, — an undisguised assumption of superiority on the part of the former, an indignant repudiation of inferiority on the part of the latter: the one convinced that

its religion alone is true, and careless of concealing its haughty contempt for all alien faiths; the other equally convinced in favour of its own creed but not equally aggressive in its declarations of infallibility. Colonel Yule remarks that Carpini and his companions were "the first to bring to western Europe the revived knowledge of a great and civilised nation lying in the extreme East upon the shores of the ocean;" but assuredly western Europe did not thereafter evince any disposition to apply the adjective "civilised" to the newly discovered nation.

Giovanni Carpini's mission can scarcely be called a proselytising expedition so much as a political. The former character may be assigned more correctly to the mission of Father William Rubruk and his three companions, who, as already noted, were sent by Louis XI. to spread Christianity among the Tartars. They left Constantinople on May 7, 1253, and were three years absent.

It was supposed that the Tartar commanding on the western frontier, Sartach, to whom Rubruk had to address himself first, was a Christian. But Rubruk found him a "besotted infidel." That epithet indicates the spirit of the Christian propagandists. A Nestorian who acted as the Tartar General's chief adviser, was regarded by Rubruk as "no better than a heretic," and the French King's envoy, when he entered the presence of the Khan Batu, fell on his knees and prayed for

A COUNTRY CROSS-CUTTING RED SEE CAREFULLY (p. 1656)

A COUNTRY CROWD GATHERED TO SEE "FOREIGN DEVILS."

the conversion of the Khan, adding to his prayer a warning of the terrible consequences of unbelief. It need scarcely be said that Rubruk and his companions made no converts.

It will be observed that neither Giovanni Carpini nor William Rubruk reached China. They made no effort to do so; though, had they won favour with the Tartars, who then governed the Middle Kingdom as well as the greater part of Asia, they would probably have opened a route for propagandism in the Far East. The first of the friars that found his way to China (1292 A.D.) was John of Montecorvino, sent by Nicholas IV. In spite of Nestorian opposition Corvino, kindly received by the great and magnanimous Kublai Khan, obtained permission to build in Peking (Cambaluc) a church which "had a steeple and a belfry with three bells that were rung every hour to summon the new converts to prayer." But the "new converts" were not at the outset very numerous. For fifteen years the friar worked alone and at first with little success, after which the Pope (Clement V.) appointed him archbishop and sent him seven suffragan bishops to aid him. Before these assistants joined him he had baptised six thousand persons. He had done something else, too: he had "bought one hundred and fifty children whom he instructed in Greek and Latin and composed for them several devotional books." Thus, at the very outset of Roman Catholic propagandism in China there was inaugurated a

manner of dealing with children which afterwards bore, and is still bearing, evil fruit. Corvino lived thirty-six years in Peking. He translated the whole of the New Testament and the Psalms of David into the Tartar language; he caused "the mysteries of the Bible to be represented by pictures in all his churches for the purpose of captivating the eyes of the barbarians;" he was able to "write and read and preach openly and freely the testimony of the law of Christ," and he "converted more than thirty thousand infidels." "Barbarians" and "infidels" — even this noble apostle had no other conception of the believers in Buddha and the disciples of Confucius among whom he worked. Yet when he died among these "barbarians" and "infidels," it is related that "all the inhabitants of Cambaluc, without distinction, mourned for the man of God, and both Christians and pagans were present at the funeral ceremony, the latter rending their garments in token of grief, . . . and the place of his burial became a pilgrimage to which the inhabitants of Cambaluc resorted with pious eagerness."

During the years that separated the death of Monte Corvino (1328) and the expulsion of the Mongol rulers from China (1363), the work of Christian propagandism appears to have continued uninterruptedly and successfully. Corvino was succeeded in Peking by Nicholas, who brought with him a company of twenty-six Franciscans,

and there was another bishopric at Kuldja. But suddenly the curtain falls upon all this effort. It disappears without a trace. Some stormy incidents preluded the end. The mission of Pascal, a Spanish friar, at Almalik in Ili, was massacred in 1339, and in 1342 a similar fate befell a new church built and a new mission established at the same place in 1340 by John of Marignoli. It may be observed, in parenthesis, that then, as now, no prospect of bodily peril deterred these intrepid propagandists. If there were any reason to regard the catastrophes of Almalik as forerunners of anti-Christian persecution on an extended scale, a partial explanation would be furnished of the disappearance of Nestorians and Franciscans alike from the Chinese field in the fourteenth century. But history could not be silent about such an extermination, had it occurred. Thus the only plausible conjecture is that the Christians of China, teachers and converts, followed the Mongols when the latter retired into Central Asia before the victorious armies of the Ming, and gradually losing in a nomadic life their hold upon the doctrines of the foreign creed, became merged in the multitudes of Moslems and Buddhists. It is not a satisfactory explanation: it leaves too much to the imagination. For though some of the comparatively immature disciples of the Monte Corvino mission might easily have fallen away from grace, credulity is overtaxed by the supposition that all the fruits of Franciscan and Nesto-

rian propagandism disappeared when brought into permanent contact with Islamism and Buddhism. The law of the survival of the fittest suggests a different result. "There is no reasonable doubt," writes Dr. Wells Williams, "that during the three centuries ending with the accession of Hung-wu (1368), the greater part of Central Asia and northern China was the scene of many flourishing communities." Less than two hundred years afterwards not one of them was to be found.

So far, however, as the immediate purpose of this retrospect is concerned, what has to be observed is that up to the accession of the Ming dynasty, in other words, up to the middle of the fourteenth century, the attitude of the Chinese towards foreign trade and foreign religions was remarkably liberal and even hospitable. There was no closing of ports, no persecution of converts to alien faiths, no law against the preaching or propagandism of strange creeds. Would any Occidental nation have shown similar magnanimity? No one dare answer that question in the affirmative.

Chapter V

PRECONVENTIONAL PERIOD OF FOREIGN INTERCOURSE AND TRADE

IN dividing the story of China's foreign intercourse and foreign trade the principle here adopted is to class as "early" the whole era during which strangers visiting China, whether for purposes of trade or in the cause of religious propagandism, recognised her complete supremacy within her own borders, respected her laws, and conformed with her systems; the era, in short, before Occidental people had begun to make practical display of masterful ways and to adopt a mien of offensive superiority towards Orientals. That era may be said to have ended with the fall of the Yuan dynasty of Mongols (1368). It ended, not because China herself underwent any change, but because European enterprise then ceased to be represented by individual adventurers and began to be conducted by companies or States. So long as foreigners, whether Indians, Arabs, Syrians, Mohammedans, Franks, — as the men of Europe were called, — Jews, Nestorians, or Franciscans, arrived singly or

without any backing of national support, they conducted themselves in China with the utmost circumspection, entertained no idea of claiming exemption for her laws, and deferred fully to her manners and customs. It was natural, indeed, that such should be the case, for in many of the essentials of civilised progress China then stood at least on a level with European countries. But from the fourteenth century new products of inventive genius and new impulses of expansion commenced to grow in the European atmosphere of inter-state competition from which China was completely segregated, while, at the same time, commerce, becoming a matter of public concern in the Occident, began to be pushed eastward by agencies of unprecedented potency which the Chinese were wholly unprepared to encounter or even to appreciate.

These gradually changing conditions did not, however, make themselves practically sensible during the first century and a half of the Ming dynasty's sway. Throughout that time China appears to have been almost wholly cut off from intercourse with Europeans. The records say that the founder of the dynasty sent (1371) to Europe in the capacity of envoy a "Frank" named Niekulum (Nicholas), who had arrived in Peking for purposes of trade four years previously, and who was now entrusted with the duty of announcing to the Western world the fact that the whole of China had been brought under the

sway of a purely Chinese sovereign. Another "Frank" reached China in 1375, accompanying a mission from Sumatra, but with these two exceptions the annals do not tell of any arrivals, or contain any suggestion of intercourse. The explanation seems to be that the Ming rulers, in the opening years of their sway, dealt with adjacent States in a manner not calculated to encourage purely commercial intercourse. The dominant aim of Chinese policy in that era was to convert all neighbouring countries into tributaries. In pursuance of that aim the South seas became the scene of unprecedented naval enterprise. Fleets of war-junks carrying large bodies of troops were despatched under eunuch commanders — notable among whom was the renowned Chêng Ho — against all sea-board States lying southward of China. Thus, during the first thirty-five years of the fifteenth century, the Chinese flag was carried to Cambodia, Malacca, Siam, the Andamans, Ceylon, Java, Borneo, Aden, Jeddah, Madras, Bengal, and other places all of which were induced, either by a display of force or by its actual exercise, to acknowledge China's overlordship and to send tribute-bearing missions to her court from time to time. European vessels had not yet made their appearance in the Indian Ocean or in the seas further east, Vasco da Gama's discovery of the Cape passage being still in the lap of a future nearly a century distant. On the other hand, the trans-Asian

routes from Burma to Yunnan on the south and from Syria to Kansuh on the north were blocked, Yunnan being in arms against the Ming dynasty, and the Mongols maintaining an almost perpetual attitude of menace or active hostility along the northern frontier. Thus Europeans, however enterprising, were not likely to think of any expedition to China through either Turkestan or Burma, and those that might have gone thither *viâ* the Persian Gulf were probably deterred by rumours of Chinese military and naval activity in the regions along that route.

A word must be interpolated here about tribute-bearing missions, which had visited China from very early times and which became notably frequent during the early sway of the Ming dynasty. The despatch of such embassies is not to be interpreted strictly as a token of vassalage. The custom of sweetening acquaintance by presents had been among the graces of Oriental intercourse from time immemorial, and even when the Pope and the King of France despatched envoys in the thirteenth century to Asian Khans, they conformed with the Eastern custom so far as to take care that their messengers did not go empty-handed. Chinese statesmen in after ages described the carrying of tribute as a mere interchange of neighbourly courtesies, and though the definition was inspired partly by a convenient desire to evade the responsibilities of suzerainty, its general truth must be accepted. There can

be no doubt that in early times the act of offering or receiving tribute did not carry the significance subsequently attached to it by European international jurists. It implied no inferiority on the part of the tribute-bearer, and it established a title to freedom from molestation by the tribute-receiver. Of that there appears to be no question. But it did not set up any practical relation of suzerain and vassal. Indeed, the accounts of Arab travellers in the ninth century show that tribute then partook of a mercantile, not less than of a political character, the tribute-bearer looking to obtain from the tribute-receiver gifts much more valuable than those offered to the latter. The Japanese in their intercourse with China recognised that principle fully. Their missions expected to carry back, and did actually carry back, from the Middle Kingdom goods commanding in Japan a greatly higher price than that of the articles presented to the Chinese court. The tribute sent to Peking during the sway of the Ming dynasty from Ceylon, the Malay States, Sumatra, Malabar, Arabia, Java, Siam, Sulu, the Riukiu (Loochoo) Islands, Borneo, and several other insular kingdoms in the southern seas, may perhaps be regarded as more significant, since many of those countries adopted the custom in deference to exhibitions of force by the eunuch-commanded squadrons. Subsequently, when China saw herself menaced by the competitive aggression of Western nations, she began to

regard these tribute-paying States as useful buffers between herself and the shock of Occidental onset, but of course no such idea can have presented itself to her in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, since Europe had then no political existence in her eyes.

The Portuguese were the first to break the interval of seclusion enjoyed by China after the exclusion of the Yuan dynasty of Mongols. Having obtained possession of Malacca in 1511, they naturally turned their eyes towards the land described in such glowing terms by Marco Polo and the Franciscan missionaries. A junk flying the Portuguese flag, under the command of Rafael Perestrello, was sent thither in 1516 by Albuquerque, Captain-General of Malacca. The Chinese understood nothing about Portugal at that time, or indeed for a long time afterwards. But they knew the Portuguese as men of an aggressive tendency who had violently possessed themselves of Malacca, one of the Middle Kingdom's tributaries and therefore entitled to some measure of the latter's protection. Nevertheless, when Perestrello's ship reached the islands at the mouth of the Canton River, her people received a kindly reception and were suffered to effect their tradal purpose successfully. In fact, the Chinese had not then changed their traditional mood of tolerance and liberality. The following year, an enterprise on a more imposing scale was undertaken by the Portuguese at Malacca. They

sent eight vessels under the command of Perez de Andrade. These, on anchoring at Shang-chuan (Saint John's Island), became an object of some suspicion to the local authorities, as was not unnatural, for in addition to the reputation already attaching to the Portuguese themselves, it must be remembered that during nearly two centuries prior to this time, nearly the whole of the littoral population of China had been constantly subjected to violence by Japanese pirates. Some historians allege that the Government of Japan assisted these raiders; that, in short, they represented a national effort. Such an idea is erroneous. The Japanese Government was not in a position to undertake any oversea enterprise during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It had not competence even to maintain order within its own borders. The pirates were not officially restrained at first. But neither were they officially encouraged. Purely private adventurers, they nevertheless created such a reign of terror that the Chinese, who had now lost the spirit of foreign enterprise which they displayed in the opening years of the Ming dynasty, regarded every squadron of foreign vessels with apprehension. Andrade, however, behaved so circumspectly that suspicion was disarmed, and two of his vessels being allowed to proceed to Canton, he achieved the commercial purpose of his mission. A part of the squadron returned to Malacca, and the rest, accompanied by some

Loochoo junks, sailed up the coast and established factories at Ningpo in Chehkiang and Tsuanchou in Fuhkien.

From that time the record changes. Perez de Andrade's brother, Simon, arrived in command of a squadron in 1518, and at once commenced a career of rapine and violence. He established a colony on Shang-chuan island (near Macao) and erected a fort there, making no attempt to conciliate the Chinese and by his conduct conveying the impression that the Portuguese were bent upon extending their career of conquest even to China. It was doubtless at this juncture that the Peking Government began to regard the tribute-bearing countries in the Southern seas as useful buffer States, from which foreign aggression ought to be warded off in the interests of the Chinese Empire's security. A Portuguese envoy (Thomas Pirez) had reached Peking and had found there a friendly welcome. But after receipt of the news of Simon de Andrade's continued depredations, the Peking authorities presented to the envoy a demand for the evacuation of Malacca, China's tributary, and on his refusal threw him and his suite into prison, executing one member of the mission and sending the others back to Canton, where the envoy himself died in jail. Thereafter (1521) Simon de Andrade and his squadron were attacked and expelled from Shang-chuan, in spite of their heavy guns, to which the Chinese gave the name of "Franks." The adventurers

did not, however, abandon the Chinese coast; they continued to infest it as pirates, using as bases of operations Tsuan-chou and Ningpo. Ignorant of these happenings, another squadron of six vessels arrived shortly afterwards under Alfonso de Melo, but when a party of sailors went on shore to procure water, they were fiercely attacked and driven with heavy loss to their ships, which then sailed away. Nevertheless the Portuguese did not by any means abandon commercial operations with China. They continued to trade at Tsuan-chou and Ningpo, but their conduct there was marked by extreme lawlessness. It was from Ningpo that Mendez Pinto and his band of desperadoes sailed to rifle the tombs of "seventeen Chinese Kings," and it was from Ningpo that parties of Portuguese used to sally out into the neighbouring villages for the purpose of seizing "women and virgins." So unendurable did these outrages become that, in 1545, the Chinese inhabitants — whose "good order, industry, manners, and love of justice," Mendez Pinto was constrained to admire when *en route* for Peking as a prisoner after his tomb-rifling escapade — rose *en masse*, and attacked the Portuguese colony, "destroying twelve thousand Christians, inclusive of eight hundred Chinese, and burning thirty-five ships and two junks." Four years later (1549) the settlers at Tsuan-chou were similarly expelled, and thus by conduct of which, had the Chinese themselves been guilty of it, no

condemnation would have been found too strong, the Portuguese permanently lost their footing upon the mainland. But in the meanwhile they had adopted a different policy in the neighbourhood of Canton, a policy of bribery and conciliation, if not of obsequiousness. It succeeded so well that in 1537 they had three settlements in that vicinity, one at Shang-chuan, one at Lang-peh-kao (called by Europeans Lampaçao), and one at Macao. This last was the product of a deception. The Portuguese, pretending that certain goods, falsely represented as tribute, had been injured in a storm and must be dried, obtained permission to erect sheds at Macao for that purpose, and subsequently remained as tenants of the place on payment of a yearly rent of five hundred ounces of silver. Macao (a Portuguese abbreviation of the Chinese name "Ama-kau," or harbour of Ama) is situated on a promontory at the southern extremity of the Pearl River's estuary. It is open to the sea, and nevertheless communicates direct with Canton by a branch of the river. Convenient for business purposes, enjoying a salubrious climate, and possessing picturesque scenery, Macao long continued to be the chief emporium of foreign trade in China. The manner of its acquisition was discreditable, but its tenure is not associated with any acts of violence such as those that disgraced the early intercourse of the Portuguese in China. It may be said, indeed, that after the terrible fate which befell their lawless

compatriots at Ningpo, and after the expulsion of the Tsuan-chou colonists, the Portuguese entirely abandoned any recourse to forceful methods, substituting a demeanour of humility and compliance which by some critics is thought to have exercised a not less injurious effect upon the possibility of establishing satisfactory relations with China. Sir John Davis, Governor of Hongkong, writing in 1845 before the immeasurable superiority of the Occidental had come to be regarded as an "eternal verity," said of the Portuguese: "Their early conduct was not calculated to impress the Chinese with any favourable idea of Europeans; and when, in course of time, they came to be competitors with the Dutch and the English, the contest of mercantile avarice tended to place them all in a still worse point of view. To this day the character of the Europeans is represented as that of a race of men intent alone on the gains of commercial traffic and regardless altogether of the means of attainment. Struck by the perpetual hostilities which existed among the foreign adventurers, assimilated in other respects by a close resemblance in their costumes and manners, the Government of the country became disposed to treat them with a degree of jealousy and exclusion which it had not deemed necessary to be exercised towards the more peaceable and well-ordered Arabs, their predecessors." And Dr. Wells Williams adds: "These characteristics of avarice, lawlessness, and power have been the

leading traits in the Chinese estimate of foreigners from their first acquaintance with them, and the latter have done little to effectually disabuse Orientals upon these points." One part of this dictum does scant justice to the small foreign mercantile community that carried on business at Canton and Macao during the period (1826–1856) immediately antecedent and subsequent to the conclusion of the first treaty with China; a community of which a recent writer, Mr. A. Michie, pens the following appreciation, over-sympathetic perhaps, but certainly true in the main: "They exemplified in a special degree the true temper and feelings of gentlemen — a moral product with which local conditions had also, no doubt, something to do. They lived in glass houses with open doors; they could by no means get away from one another or evade a mutual observation which was constant and searching. Whatever standards, therefore, were recognised by the community, the individual members were constrained to live up to them in a society where words and deeds lay open to the collective criticism. And the standard was really a high one. Truth, honour, courage, generosity, nobility, were qualities common to the whole body; and those who were not so endowed by birthright could not help assuming the virtue they did not possess and, through practice, making it eventually their own. Black sheep there were, no doubt, but being never whitewashed, they did not infect the flock, as

THE ORDINARY METHOD OF CARRYING BAGGAGE.

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happens in more advanced communities." Long, however, before the influence of this community could have begun to soften Chinese impressions of the foreigner, those impressions had been indelibly fixed by such striking incidents as Simon de Andrade's brutalities and piracies, Mendez Pinto's sacrilegious robberies, the barbarous rapes of the Ningpo women, the excesses committed by the Tsuan-chou settlers, and other events to be now briefly related.

The Spaniards stand next to the Portuguese in the record of collective European intercourse with China. They conquered the Philippines in 1543 and formally annexed the whole group a few years later. Considerable settlements of Chinese traders were found in the islands, junks having long been in the habit of proceeding thither from Foochou, Tsuan-chou, and Amoy. But although the possession of the Philippines should have suggested commerce with China, which is within easy reach of those islands at all seasons, the Spaniards showed no enterprise in that direction. They left the initiative to missionaries, two of whom, — Augustine friars, — taking advantage of the auspices of a Chinese naval officer who in 1575 reached Manila in pursuit of a notorious pirate, accompanied him on his return to the province of Kwang-tung. Courteously received by the Chinese local authorities, they were nevertheless ultimately obliged to return to Manila *re infecta*, the ill-repute of the Portuguese settlers having rendered the Chinese

unwilling to extend their circle of foreign intercourse. An abortive attempt of another body of Franciscans to obtain a footing in China — an attempt which owed its failure largely to the treachery of a Portuguese-speaking Chinaman — was followed by the only official embassy that Spain sent to China before the nineteenth century. This occurred in 1580. The ambassador, Martin Ignatius, met with a series of misfortunes. Driven by adverse winds to a point northward of Canton, his landing suggested groundless apprehensions to the local authorities, so that he and his suite were imprisoned and did not recover their freedom until the Portuguese governor of Macao intervened in their behalf.

But although the Spaniards neglected their opportunities of trading with China, their treatment of Chinese immigrants in Manila furnished an object lesson of terrible impressiveness. It fell out in this way. The Spaniards in Manila receiving large supplies of silver from Mexico and paying it out for Chinese imports, against which they had virtually no exports to exchange, an idea gradually gained currency in China that Manila — or "Luzon," as the Chinese then called the Philippines and do still call them — possessed great stores of the precious metals. Thus the people of the Middle Kingdom began to grow inquisitive and the Spaniards suspicious. It has been shown that the outcome of Chinese suspicion was simply to send away the suspected persons.

Spanish suspicion took another form. It culminated (1603) in an indiscriminate massacre which lasted several days, all the Chinese in the islands, to the number of many thousands, being either put to the sword or sent to the galleys. Nor did the suspicious mood exhaust itself by that savagery. Chinese traders, attracted by the wealth of the "Franks," still visited the islands, whereupon the Spaniards set a limit to their numbers, imposed on each a poll tax amounting to two pounds of modern money and subjected them otherwise to very harsh treatment. Then, in 1662, when the Spaniards believed themselves menaced by an attack from the notorious Chinese pirate Kwok-sing-yu (Koxinga), they adopted the precaution of another massacre of the settlers from the Middle Kingdom, lest these should combine with the pirates. It is not a mere figure of speech to say that such doings furnished an object lesson to Chinese officials. The records show that the system adopted by the latter at Canton for restricting the intercourse between their own people and foreigners, and at Macao for segregating the Portuguese Settlement by building a wall across the neck of the peninsula, were suggested by Chinese who from bitter experience had learned at Manila how obtrusive strangers ought to be treated.

The third to make their entry into the Far-Eastern field were the Dutch (1601). They came fresh from victories over the Spanish in Europe, and the prime purpose of their eastward

enterprise was to attack the Oriental possessions of their enemies, which they did successfully at Malacca, the Spice Islands, and other places, but unsuccessfully at Manila. No discrimination was made by these invaders between Spanish and Portuguese colonies, as Portugal then formed an integral part of the Spanish realm. It would have been too much to expect that in the seventeenth century the Dutch should pause to inquire into the nature of Portugal's tenure of Macao. A Portuguese colony had established itself there, and that was enough for the Dutch. They assailed the place with seventeen ships, and being repulsed with heavy loss, passed over to the Pescadores, which they occupied, building a fort there and forcing the Chinese inhabitants to labour for them. There was no quarrel between China and Holland. The two countries were complete strangers to each other. Thus their acquaintance opened first with an armed essay on the part of the Dutch to drive the Portuguese from a place in China which the latter had leased to them, and secondly with the forceful seizure of another place in China's territory, though no state of war existed nor even any cause of quarrel. In short, the Dutch introduced themselves to the Chinese in the guise of international freebooters. Under such circumstances Chinese, Spaniards, and Portuguese alike were interested in preventing trade between the new-comers and the Middle Kingdom. Then as now, shrewd, brave, tenacious of

purpose, not to be deterred by any obstacle or disheartened by any failure, the Dutch adopted the expedient of making themselves so hurtful as enemies that their friendship should become obviously desirable. They raided the Chinese coast, alternating the operation with offers of amity in exchange for commercial privileges. At this stage a clever thing, as international cleverness goes, was done by the Chinese. They informed the Dutch, through an envoy sent by the latter, that trade would be sanctioned provided that the Pescadores were evacuated in favour of a settlement in Formosa. Now Formosa could not be regarded as an appanage of China at that time. She had never made any attempt to occupy it. Some of her traders settled there in the fifteenth century, but no protection was given to them by their own country. Thus China might as well have sent the Dutch out into space as to Formosa. The Dutch, however, had to make the exchange eventually, and the fact that the necessity was forced upon them by the tenacity and courage of the troops sent against them from the mainland may be noted parenthetically as a signal evidence of Chinese military prowess at that epoch. The doings of the Dutch in Formosa are not germane to this page of history. The only apposite fact is that they sacrificed Christian propagandism on the altar of commercial expediency. Their ministers of the Gospel were winning many converts in Formosa at the time when Japan def-

initely assumed an attitude hostile to Christianity. It thus became evident to the Dutch that to continue the work of propagandism in Formosa would tend to discredit their protestations of religious indifference in Japan, and might consequently forfeit the tradal privileges which they alone had succeeded in retaining in the island Empire. Hence they took active measures to discourage the continuance of proselytising efforts in Formosa. Critics have censured them roundly for so doing. Yet it is tolerably certain that if a plebiscite could be taken among the foreign commercial communities of China to-day, a majority would vote for restricting the field of religious propagandism. The Dutch in the seventeenth century were men of business before everything. Their abandonment of Christian labours for the sake of trade consorted well with the demeanour of the various envoys sent by them to the Chinese Court. These ambassadors and their suites observed strictly all the forms prescribed by Chinese etiquette, prostrating themselves and knocking their heads upon the ground, not only in the presence of the Emperor, but also before his empty throne and on all officially indicated occasions. They were never allowed to enter into any negotiations that would have been inconsistent with the rôle of tribute-bearer which the Chinese assigned to them. For these things, too, the Dutch have been much blamed. Yet it is difficult to see how they could have acted other-

wise, being entirely without force to insist upon exceptional treatment. From the Chinese point of view, however, the record cannot have commanded much respect. An intercourse "commenced in rapine and aggression towards a nation which had never provoked them," was continued by fruitless obsequiousness, and included an act comically inconsistent with the claims they advanced in their own behalf, namely, an interdict (1839) against the admission of Chinese settlers to any of the Dutch Indian colonies, since the skill of the immigrants threatened to engross the labour market. The Spaniards massacred Chinese colonists or discriminated harshly against them. But the Spaniards did not persist in forcing their own company on the Chinese in China. It was left for the Dutch to practise exclusiveness against others while claiming liberality for themselves. Other nations, however, are not ashamed to follow the same course in this twentieth century.

If the overland route be considered as well as the oversea, Russian intercourse with China antedated that of the Dutch. But it bore no fruit, political or ethical, until a comparatively late date. Associated with it, however, is a notable fact, namely, that the first foreign treaty ever concluded by China was with Russia. There is reason to believe that the Russians had been in contact with the Chinese for several years before the latter associated the former with Europe, or differentiated them from the group of hyper-

borean races that had long kept the northern borders of the Middle Kingdom in a state of unrest. Parker mentions a little known fact, namely, that Chinese history makes frequent mention of Russian imperial guards at the Mongol Court of Peking during the century ended in 1350, and since China had no political hold over Russia at that time, the only inference is that these men served the khans as mercenaries. They disappear altogether from Chinese annals throughout the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), though Mendez Pinto relates that he saw Russians in Shansi in 1547; but Russian annals say that envoys were sent to Peking in 1567, in 1619, and in 1653, and that all of them failed, the first two because they carried no presents, the third because the ambassador refused to prostrate himself before the Emperor. Meanwhile a desultory struggle was going on between Russians and Chinese along the banks of the Amur, and some delimitation of the frontier being necessary, commissioners of the two Powers met at Nerchinsk in 1689. There China signed her first international convention. Evidently she entertained a loftier conception of her own strength and of her sovereign rights at that era than she did when in 1902 she negotiated her last agreement with the same Power about the same question. The Missionary Gerbillon, who acted as intermediary, has left it on record that she showed herself far more exacting than her *vis-à-vis*, and the terms of the con-

vention confirm his statement, for it provided that the Russians should abandon Albazin and Manchuria, which they had held as their own for over thirty years, and it gave nothing in return except freedom of trade across the northern border. Other Russian envoys visited China at intervals. One of them (Ysbrandt Ides, 1692) took a year and eight months to cross the wastes and wilds of Central Asia, and another, who followed twenty-seven years later, found himself involved in the old dispute which had caused the failure of one of his predecessors, the dispute about *kowtowing*[1] to the Emperor. The Dutch conformed quietly with Chinese customs in this matter, but the Russians showed a different spirit. Ismailoff, the ambassador of 1719, refused to "kowtow" unless it was agreed that a Chinese envoy visiting St. Petersburg should comply with Russian forms of etiquette. The Chinese never sent envoys, so they could accept this compromise with light hearts, and Ismailoff "saved his face."[2] A second treaty was negotiated between China and Russia in 1727. It is remarkable as having remained in operation no less than one hundred and thirty-one years, the longest life ever enjoyed by an international convention. Catherine was then on the throne of Russia, and Count Vladislavitch served her as ambassador to the Middle Kingdom. He obtained the latter's consent to the permanent establishment of a mission of the Greek church in Peking; six ecclesi-

[1] See Appendix, note 20. [2] See Appendix, note 21.

astical and four lay members who were to be changed decennially, and who were to study the Chinese and Manchu languages for the purposes of intelligent communication between the two States. It has been concluded by some historians that the germ of this mission must be sought in a more remote event; namely, the removal of a number of Russians from Manchuria to Peking after the Treaty of Nerchinsk, and their incorporation in the Banner Troops. Another theory is that the Emperor Yungching, who occupied the throne at the time of Vladislavitch's arrival, welcomed the Russian mission as a means of counterbalancing the influence of the Jesuits, towards whom he did not entertain cordial sentiments. Whatever may be the exact truth as to those points, the fact has to be recorded that the Russian archimandrites lived peacefully and uninterruptedly in Peking, never coming into collision with the Chinese authorities and never allowing themselves to be drawn into the religious controversies which, as will presently be seen, did so much to discredit Christian propagandism. It must further be recorded that Russia's overland trade with the Middle Kingdom, conducted mainly at the frontier marts of Kiakhta and Maimaichin, never involved any serious complications, so that, on the whole, the relations between the two Empires were conspicuously free from violences, aggressions, and hostilities of every kind.

France also did not contribute anything to the

unfavourable opinion that the Chinese formed of Occidental nations prior to the nineteenth century. Her relations with China — apart from the despatch of Christian missionaries — were limited to mere courtesies, and she never interested herself in seeking markets for her nationals' goods in the Far East.

England introduced herself to the Chinese in an essentially bellicose character and long retained it. Under the impulse of the spirit of enterprise that animated her in the days of Elizabeth, three ships were sent to China, in charge of one Benjamin Wood, bearing letters from the Queen to the Emperor. They never reached their destination, being lost on the way, and for forty years the essay was not renewed. But in 1637 a squadron of four British ships, the *Dragon*, the *Sun*, the *Catherine*, and the *Ann*, arrived off Macao under the command of Captain Weddel. Of course the Portuguese did what they could to prevent the success of these commercial rivals. They threw all sorts of obstacles in Weddel's way, until, his patience being exhausted, he left Macao and sailed up the river towards Canton, casting anchor in the Bogue under the guns of a fort erected to guard the approach to the city. There he found the opportunity of which the Portuguese manœuvres had hitherto deprived him, and was able to convey to the authorities an intimation of his peaceful purpose. But during an interval of six days' delay which they had solicited, the Chi-

nese, completely misled by Portuguese slanders, made preparations to attack the new-comers, and finally opened fire on one of their boats. The result was signal and sudden. Weighing anchor, the four ships went up with the flood and selected convenient berths near the fort, "from whence came many shot, yet not any that touched so much as hull or rope; whereupon, not being able to endure their bravadoes any longer, each ship began to play furiously upon them with its broadsides." Two or three hours of such play sufficed, after which there was the usual sequel, — a landing party, the dismantling of the fort, and the "demolition of what they could." With such an object lesson as to the consequences of resistance, and being also informed, it is said, that Captain Weddel and his people had been maligned, the Chinese agreed that the goods brought by the ships might be sold and cargoes obtained in exchange, the British, on their side, restoring the fort's guns as well as the junks and other objects seized by them. English annals assert a belief that the Chinese were ultimately convinced of the new-comers' peaceful objects, but no solid grounds exist for such a theory. The more probable account is that the Chinese did not distinguish Captain Weddel's men from Dutchmen, and that the memory of their violence survived all other impressions.

Represented by the Portuguese to be "rogues, thieves, and beggars," and proved by their own

acts to be men of violent methods, the English made no attempt to renew commercial relations with China until 1664, when, after an interval of twenty-seven years, the East India Company sent some ships to Macao. But though on this occasion there was no breach of the peace, the Portuguese again succeeded in prejudicing the Chinese so greatly against the new-comers that they could not accomplish anything. In Formosa, a few years later (1670), a better result was attained by means of a treaty with the ex-pirate "Koxinga," — a Japanese on his mother's side, — the "King" of the island. This, the first commercial convention concluded by an European Power with a Chinese potentate, is specially interesting because of its explicit provisions on the subject of jurisdiction. The extraterritorial principle received clear recognition, the "King" undertaking to punish all wrongs or injuries done by his subjects to the British, and the latter undertaking a similar duty of redress in the case of Formosans. Favourable tariff conditions also were obtained — three per cent duty on imports and no duty on exports — and freedom of tradal intercourse was guaranteed. But Formosa proved an unfruitful field, as was not unnatural under the circumstances, and at Amoy — which, being in effect the mainland mart of Formosa, was included at the same time in the field of English operations — the commerce, though lucrative at the outset, gradually began to suffer from restrictions imposed by the

Manchu rulers of China. In this particular case it is easy to detect a reason for the Peking Government's opposition. The English figured at Amoy as the commercial allies of a pirate who defied Chinese authority and had forcibly possessed himself of a portion of Chinese territory. No Western Power would have regarded the English with benevolent eyes under such circumstances.

But, speaking generally, a difference is observable between the attitude of these Manchurian Tartars and the attitude of the Ming Chinese towards foreign trade. Not only did the Tartars look upon trade itself with comparative indifference if not with absolute disfavour, but they were also influenced by political considerations. Ruling a nation of over three hundred millions in a territory nearly as large as Europe, the Manchus regarded with natural apprehension the contingency of combinations between their Chinese subjects and foreign nations. That danger led them to discountenance foreign trade and intercourse. It produced another effect also. It betrayed them into extravagant assumptions of superiority to all outside peoples. They appear to have thought that to make a striking show of overlordship in their dealings with every foreign nation would produce a wholesome impression on the minds of their Chinese subjects, and in obedience to that conception of statecraft they endeavoured to enforce compliance with humiliating forms of

obeisance whenever an European envoy visited Peking or an Occidental traveller or trader came into contact with their own officials; and if they found envoys, travellers, or traders willing to submit to such humiliation — as the Dutch and the Portuguese were willing — they made capital out of this complaisance by giving the utmost prominence to it. The theory may be at once dismissed that the Peking rulers regarded kneelings and head-knockings as ordinary forms of polite salutation. Their own envoys invariably refused, alike in mediæval and in modern times, to observe such ceremonies in a foreign country, and thus there can be no doubt about the significance attaching to them.

The exactions of the Manchu rulers of China in this respect, supplemented by their general exclusiveness and hauteur, have been commonly attributed to an absorbing belief in the superiority of their own civilisation, their own customs, and their own philosophy. But although the Chinese proper may perhaps be imbued with such a conviction, and though in their case the mood would have some basis of reason, nothing of the kind can be justly alleged of the Tartars, whose claims to a high place among the nations of the Old World, whether from an intellectual, an ethical, or a civilised point of view, are absolutely intangible. The Tartars sought to keep China as they found her because the permanence of their own sway might be endangered by a spirit of progress, in

other words, of change; and a natural corollary of such a programme was their endeavour to inspire and preserve a belief in their own acknowledged superiority to all outside Powers. It must be frankly admitted that the doings of the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the English, as described above, were not at all calculated to encourage hospitality or inspire respect.

Unsuccessful in Formosa and in a lesser degree at Amoy also, the East India Company again turned its attention to Canton, only to again encounter unreasoning opposition from the Portuguese. Sir John Davis, one of the most impartial historians of China's foreign relations, although he wrote at a time so close to the events recorded that a true perspective must have been very difficult to obtain, says of Portuguese action: "In the progress of all these trials one of the most striking circumstances is the stupid pertinacity with which the Portuguese at Macao excluded English ships from that port, and the perfidy with which they represented their supposed rivals to the Chinese with a view to prevent their getting a footing at Canton. . . . Their systematic policy has been to attribute motives to the English which should injure them with the provincial Government." Such tactics did not permanently succeed in excluding the English, but the methods of the Portuguese must have helped to discredit all foreign intercourse in the eyes of the Chinese, who, whether they believed the Portu-

THE ISLAND BRIDGE AND HILL OF LONGEVITY.

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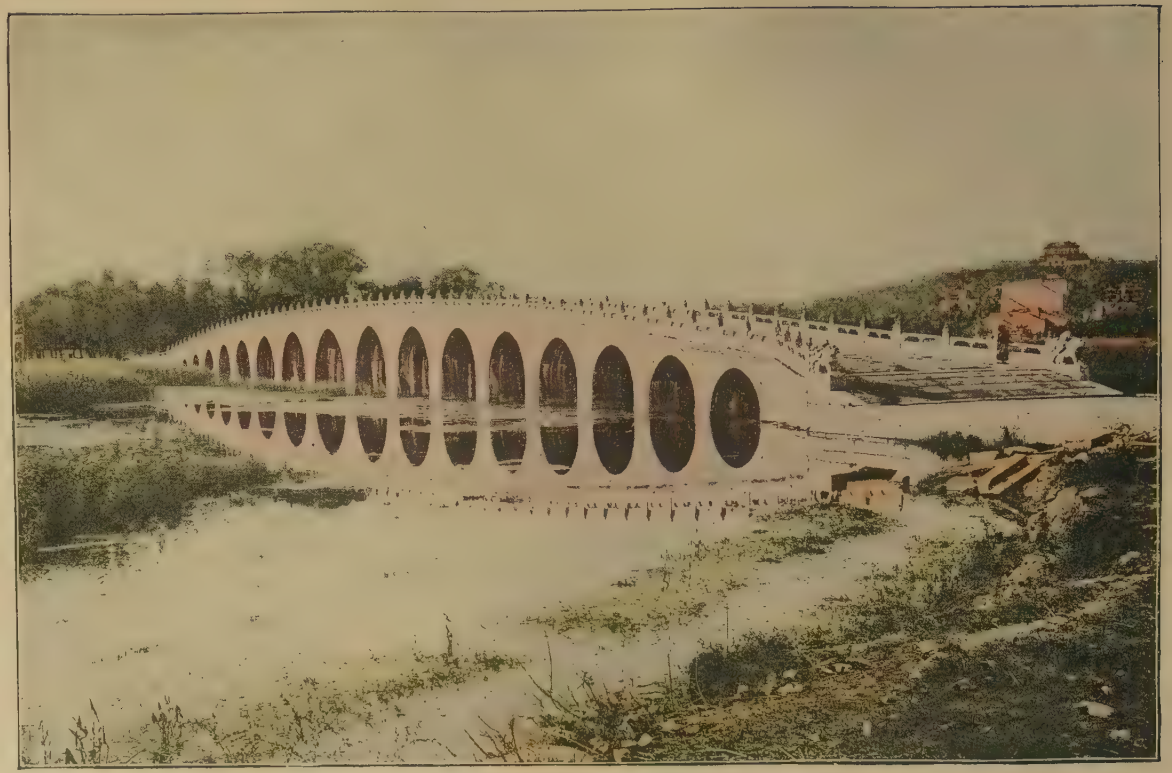

guese to be slanderers or the English to be scoundrels, could not but anticipate that the presence of the two together in Canton would conduce little to the preservation of peace and good order. There is, indeed, no blacker page in all this record than the page setting forth the acts of the Portuguese. They never lost an opportunity of misrepresenting the character and designs of the English to the Chinese authorities; twice (1802 and 1808) when an English garrison was placed at Macao to protect the place against possible French designs, — Great Britain regarding Macao as a Portuguese colony, — the Portuguese did everything in their power to injure their protectors in the estimation of the Chinese and to incite the latter against them, and in 1773 they handed over to the local authorities for execution an Englishman against whom no evidence whatever had been adduced. On that occasion the Vicar-General declared before the Senate of Macao: "Moralists decide that when a tyrant demands even an innocent person with menaces of ruin to the community if refused, the whole number may call on any individual to deliver himself up for the public good, which is of more worth than that of an individual. Should he refuse to obey, he is not innocent, he is a criminal;" another Senator said: "The Mandarins are forcing away the Chinese dealers, determined to starve us; therefore we had better surrender the Englishman." In every phase of

their intercourse with foreigners the Chinese show well by the side of the Macao Portuguese, concerning whom, however, it is only just to note that their truly representative national character has often been denied.

Modern experience has taught the public to assume the presence of competent machinery for preserving order and administering justice at all Eastern places frequented by foreigners for tradal purposes. There is implied in the very word "settlement" an idea of duly exercised consular authority and of conventional provision for regulating all commercial operations. Therefore it is necessary to premise that very different conditions existed at Canton when the English began to trade there at the close of the seventeenth century. There was no such thing as a consul; no such thing as a convention; no such thing as a recognised division of jurisdiction; no such thing as a mutual agreement about the mode of doing business; no such thing as a fixed tariff, or harbour regulations, or police. Each side had to be guided by its own instincts. If, as happened sometimes in brawls between natives and foreign sailors, a Chinese subject was killed, the Chinese, in obedience to their traditional doctrine of a life for a life, demanded surrender of a foreigner in order that they might execute him, — a demand which the foreigners sometimes conceded and sometimes rejected; and when disputes had to be settled in connection with these events or other

untoward incidents, the common device on each side alike was to suspend, or threaten to suspend, tradal relations. The directors of the East India Company, which, by grant from the British Government, enjoyed a monopoly of British trade at Canton and in China generally, sought to remedy this anomalous state of affairs, in part at any rate, by investing their chief representatives with consular authority. But they had no competence to delegate such powers, and they did not take the essential precaution, nor were they in a position to take it, of reporting the appointment to the Chinese Government and obtaining the latter's *exequatur*. It has often been noted by critics of China and her ways in mediæval times that she deliberately and avowedly based her treatment of foreigners on an old maxim which says that since barbarians lack any due appreciation of civilised rule, the logical way to govern them is by misrule. Obviously the paradox is not to be construed literally. It meant nothing more than that expediency must be substituted for law in governing men that neither know nor respect the law. Can it be claimed that in their early intercourse with China the Powers of Europe — Portugal, Spain, Holland, and England — gave themselves any concern about the international codes which they would have observed as a matter of course and necessity in their dealings with each other? The so-called consular representative of the East India Company was never officially

recognised by the Chinese local authorities, and they equally ignored the consular agents appointed by France, Denmark, and Sweden at subsequent dates under circumstances of similar indifference to the rules of international intercourse. Thus the foreign communities were a law unto themselves. They obeyed or disregarded the sanctions and vetoes of conscience, not being subject to any other form of restraint, and their relations with the Chinese have been aptly compared to a state of nature. Sensible apparently of the abuses incidental to such a want of system, the Chinese local authorities appointed a leading native merchant to undertake the management of everything connected with the trade. That had been the method pursued in Japan for two centuries with regard to Korean and Chinese commerce, and the Canton authorities may easily have conceived it to be the method pursued by the English themselves at this very time in China, for the East India Company had an absolute official monopoly of the trade, and the Company's chief of council was not unlikely to be mistaken for a prototype of the sole agent whom the Chinese nominated. That nominee, however, is described in the British records of the time as a "monster in trade," and the idea of his appointment raised no little indignation, which perhaps the Chinese failed to appreciate clearly. Nevertheless they deposed the "monster," and advised their merchants to replace him by a combination, of which also the

East India Company may have seemed to furnish a model. But the representatives of the Company refused to transact business unless the combination was dissolved and their threat proved temporarily effectual.

It is usually stated, in a rough way, that suspension of trade by order of the Chinese authorities was the serious danger always hanging over the foreigner's head in those times. But the annals show that what with duties upon imports, fees levied from purveyors of food-stuffs, presents to the collectors of customs, tonnage dues, and so forth, the local authorities made such a rich harvest out of the commerce that its suspension amounted to a calamity in their eyes. Hence, when official extortions grew excessive, or when inconvenient complications of other kinds arose, the British merchants sometimes resorted to the heroic device of sailing away from Canton to seek more propitious markets at Ningpo, Amoy, Chusan, or some other place along the coast. Usually, however, that kind of remedy proved worse than the original disease, and Canton remained in effect the sole *entrepôt*, the British merchant struggling bravely against Chinese official greed, on the one hand, and against, on the other, the unsympathetic exigencies of a London Board of Directors, who saw little beyond the four corners of their ledgers.

The great Emperor Chienlung, immediately after his accession (1736), relieved the trade of

some of its heaviest burdens, announcing the fact in an edict which, being sent to Canton for promulgation, gave rise to an incident vividly illustrating the relations between the Chinese and the foreign merchants. It had long been the uniform policy of the Chinese to insist that in his dealings with the local officials the foreigner must not be granted any exemption from observing the forms and ceremonies followed by a Chinese subject under similar circumstances. The foreigner, on the contrary, or at all events the Englishman, clung tenaciously to the principle that whatever would be humiliating or undignified in his own country must be eschewed in China, though no such sense attached to it there. No one can have much difficulty in appreciating the feelings that animated the parties to such a controversy. Each credited the other with precisely the sentiment which both found offensive. Thus when Chienlung's edict arrived, the Chinese seemed to see an unique opportunity. A decree freeing exports from a duty of ten per cent, and abolishing a payment of several hundreds of pounds hitherto exacted on the arrival of each ship, must possess so much importance, not merely on account of the actual relief it afforded, but also for the sake of the brighter era it appeared to herald, that the foreign merchants might be expected to forget their dignity in their gratitude. They were invited to the Governor's *yamên* in the city to hear the edict read, and they

were told that, in accordance with the rules of Chinese etiquette, they would be expected to prostrate themselves during the reading. Doubtless they regarded the issue of the edict as a turning-point in their career. Yet they utterly refused to hear the edict on condition of making such an obeisance, and they persisted in their refusal. "Suspecting that the Chinese merchants endeavoured to make us believe this (the necessity of kneeling with the head on the ground), in order that by our compliance we might be brought down to the same servile level with themselves; considering also that the posture insisted on is such a mark of abject submission as we never pay to our own sovereigns in Europe, we unanimously agreed that we should dishonour ourselves and our countries in complying with it. Being apprehensive that the Chinese merchants might succeed in their design of weakening us by creating in us mutual suspicions and jealousies, we met in a body, and by unanimous agreement, gave our solemn words of honour that none of us would submit to the slavish posture required, nor make any concession or proposal of accommodation separately, without first acquainting all the rest." There were ten trading-vessels in the river when this occurred — four English, two French, two Dutch, one Danish, and one Swedish — but all these different nationalities clung firmly to their compact. It is a fine story, still capable of producing a thrill of exultation in the reader's

heart. But what was the impression conveyed to the Chinese?

Although successful in thus asserting their own customs over those of the country where they resided, the foreign traders were unable to prevent the local authorities from carrying out their plan of entrusting the whole conduct of the business at Canton to a fixed number of Chinese merchants. It is difficult to see, indeed, what other device could have been practically efficacious under the circumstances. Duties and various charges had to be collected, and some machinery was necessary to check outrages on the part of ship's crews and excesses on the part of unscrupulous traders. Yet, although the Chinese had undoubtedly the right to make such collections and adopt such precautions, they were without means of enforcing their right unless they assumed competence to arrest foreigners and to sit in judgment on them. From police and judicial functions, however, they always prudently shrank, their invariable rule being to leave the foreigner's person severely alone except in the one contingency of his having taken a Chinese life. Nothing offered, therefore, except to attach to the trade an association of Chinese merchants who, in return for the sole privilege of conducting it, would undertake to collect the prescribed duties and fees, and to be responsible for the transactions of each supercargo as well as for the conduct of each ship's crew while in port.

This system, though eminently practical and well adapted to the conditions of the era, evoked much abuse at first, the Chinese officials being accused not only of insufferable pride because they avoided direct dealings with the alien, but also of organising the Hong Merchants solely for the purpose of subjecting foreigners to extortion. Yet the testimony of impartial observers shows clearly that even in the beginning of the nineteenth century when official and popular prejudice against aliens had assumed much larger dimensions than it showed a hundred years previously, the Hong Merchants constituted an excellent medium between foreign traders and native clients, discharging their functions as middlemen with fidelity and taking a genuine interest in the promotion of trade. That the system remained throughout entirely free from abuse cannot be supposed. Sometimes dishonest men obtained admission to the ranks of the Hong Merchants, and since, by order of the Emperor, the whole body had to be jointly responsible for the liabilities of each member, there was evident opportunity for chicanery. Thus, in 1820, two of the association contracted debts to foreign merchants, or misappropriated funds received from them, to the total amount of two million dollars, which sum the association had to make good. Then the principle of corporate responsibility was abolished in favour of individual liability, which also displayed its untrustworthiness in 1838.

when two of the Hong Merchants failed, owing more than three million dollars to foreigners. Yet on the whole the system worked well and has now become an honoured tradition of the trade.

This record exhibits some of its strangest phases after Canton became known to the Occident as a place of odd inhabitants and mysterious opportunities. The first British war-ship to enter the Pearl River was the *Centurion*. She arrived off Macao in 1741, and having effected some necessary repairs, she put to sea, captured the Spanish treasure-ship *Acapulco*, and sailed back to the river with her prize. The Chinese seem to have been perplexed by the event. Though not deeply versed in international law as coded in the West, they had an instinctive perception that their harbours ought not to be used as bases of warlike operations against the ships of a friendly Power. Commodore Anson's report represents them as entertaining "a strange notion of a ship which went about the world seeking other ships in order to take them," and the gallant officer having failed to bring them "to hear reason on that head," had to announce that he should not leave Canton until he got all the provisions he needed, which the frightened Chinese finally smuggled on board the *Centurion*. Curiously enough, the Hong Merchants also now began to discover an "incapacity for listening to reason" on the side of foreigners, and to represent them

to the Canton officials as "barbarous and fierce."

It was about this time that there appeared upon the scene a figure destined to play a lively part in the subsequent history of foreign relations with China,— the *literatus* with his placard. The political pasquinade had long been in vogue among the Chinese, but not until the middle of the eighteenth century did it occupy itself with the foreigner, caricaturing his acts and making slanderous additions to his already not spotless record. Much indignation was stirred among the little colony of oversea traders when they learned that insult was thus added to the injury they had long been suffering in pocket from the exactions of the Hong Merchants, who in proportion as they learned to better appreciate the risks involved in standing security for the gentle and orderly stranger, grew more anxious to compensate themselves at his expense.

Meanwhile the French and English sailors, whose ships lay in the river, were fighting and slaying each other, so that at length the Chinese authorities hit upon the expedient of assigning different places for the recreation of each nationality — Dane's Island for the English, French Island for the Gauls — and onlooking natives gathered confirmation of the truth of the epithets "fierce and barbarous."

Then followed a formal veto against the pursuit of foreign trade elsewhere than at Canton;

a veto avowedly founded, not on any desire to exclude the alien, but on the frankly uneconomical plea that by the use of ports nearer to the centres of production, the Government suffered a loss in transit dues. The foreigners, ridiculing such an evidence of official greed and ignorance, considered that their superior intelligence gave them a right to ignore the veto, and indeed the Chinese apparently took no active steps to enforce it, nor placed any obstacles in the way of travellers. Thus Mr. Flint, celebrated as the first Englishman to master the difficulties of the Chinese tongue, had no qualms in undertaking a journey to Peking *viâ* Ningpo, his ultimate object being to lay before the "Dragon Throne" a complaint against the exactions of the local officials at Canton. At Ningpo communication was denied to him, so, abandoning the idea of trade, he pushed on resolutely to the neighbourhood of Peking. There the treatment accorded to this enterprising linguist bore strong testimony to the mood and methods of the Chinese Government. An officer of high rank was ordered to escort him back to Canton, with directions to investigate the complaints preferred by him. The result was the degradation of the chief customs official (the *Hoppo*) and a large reduction of the duties and fees levied from the foreign merchants. But Mr. Flint was banished from China, and the Chinese subject who had acted as his amanuensis in preparing the petition to the Empe-

ror, was beheaded; the native's crime being that he had assisted an alien to break the law; the alien's, that he had attempted to open trade at Ningpo in defiance of the Government's publicly proclaimed interdict. In short, justice was done all round according to Chinese lights, the wrongs of the foreigners being redressed, but the law-breaking agents of their remonstrances punished with mediæval severity. As for the foreign community at Canton, however, its simple verdict was that "the Mandarins were absolute villains."

In the margin of these salient incidents there was a tolerably copious catalogue of common assaults and deadly affrays, sometimes foreigners alone being concerned, but more frequently foreigners and Chinese. It was of course impossible for the local authorities to subject an alien to any intelligent form of trial. When the supposed perpetrator of a deed of blood was handed over to them by his own nationals, — and to the eternal shame of the Portuguese, the Americans, and the English such surrenders did actually take place, — they usually strangled him at once. The certainty that he would otherwise escape altogether tended doubtless to sharpen their animosity, but it is also reasonable to suppose that the very fact of his surrender amounted in their eyes to a verdict of guilty. On the other hand, inflamed by the injustices thus perpetrated, rendered desperate by a sense of helplessness to exact

redress, and chafing under the pecuniary extortions of which they were themselves the victims, the foreigners were driven to "acts of atrocious violence, coming strictly under the definition of piracy, murder, or arson, which, under a more vigorous government, would have rendered them the property of the public executioner." To this category belong the exploits of a certain Captain McClary, who (1781) captured a sloop and carried her to Macao on suspicion that she was Spanish. The Portuguese, who never failed to rise to the level of a lucrative occasion, imprisoned McClary, compelled him to give an order for the sloop's release, and then, as she suffered shipwreck before the order could be executed, so ill-treated him during two months of incarceration, and so terrified him with threats of handing him over to the Chinese, that he agreed to pay $70,000 for his freedom. Restored to his ship, and finding himself anchored beside a Dutch vessel in the river below Canton, he promptly seized her on receipt of news that war had been declared between England and Holland. The Chinese Authorities remonstrated and sought the assistance of the East India Company's Council. But the latter declared that their power did not extend beyond protest, though McClary was in their service. An extraordinary compromise ultimately ended the trouble. The Chinese were suffered to simulate the re-capture of the prize by boarding her with shouts and demon-

strations, and McClary kept the stolen property. Such were the happenings that furnished to the two peoples material for mutual appreciation.

The British Government now began to think that the time had come to introduce some element of order into its relations with China, instead of leaving everything in the hands of a company whose powers were limited to remonstrance and deportation. In 1792 the Earl of Macartney, with a numerous suite and a costly array of presents, was sent as ambassador to the Chinese Court. From the Government of the Middle Kingdom he received a brilliant welcome. They spent $850,000 on his entertainment; he walked in "the magnificent garden of the Son of Heaven," made a romantic voyage down the Grand Canal, and carried away a vivid impression of the grandeur and extent of the Chinese Empire. But he did no business. The Chinese took clever care that his embassy should retain the unimpaired attributes of tribute-bearing. Any discussion of affairs would have been inconsistent with that character; therefore the whole time was devoted to interchanges of courtesy. But the Earl received a letter for his sovereign in which the latter was informed by the now aged Emperor Chienlung that British commerce must be strictly limited to Canton. "You will not be able to complain that I have not clearly forewarned you. Let us therefore live in peace and friendship, and do not make light of

my warning." One of the principal objects of the mission had been to obtain permission for carrying on trade at Ningpo, Chusan, Tientsin, and other places besides Canton. In that respect it failed signally. Chienlung doubtless thought that he possessed the right of discrimination within his own dominions. The Dutch had excluded his subjects from their East-Indian colonies, and the Spaniards in Manila had subjected them to discriminations which amounted almost to exclusion. But Chienlung had yet to learn that there was one law for Western peoples, another for Eastern, and Europe at the moment was too much engrossed with its own affairs to undertake the duty of instructing him.

Lord Macartney's mission had a consequence which, although removed from its cause by an interval of twenty-one years, should be remembered incidentally. A Chinese official named Sung having shown much civility to the mission, and having subsequently won many warm friends among the English during his tenure of the Canton viceroyalty, it was decided to send him from England a letter and some valuable presents, "as an acknowledgment of past good offices and an earnest of future ones." Sung, then a member of the Grand Council in Peking, accepted the presents, but when the fact became known to his Government, it degraded him and returned the gifts. If an English official in Sung's position had accepted presents from for-

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eigners under similar circumstances, he too would have incurred disgrace. No rule is more strictly observed, no tradition more honoured in the British service. Yet the conclusion formed with regard to the Chinese on that occasion was that the incident "eminently displayed their jealous and suspicious character."

Some patience is required in perusing this record, so monotonously uniform are the indications it furnishes. The first fifteen years of the nineteenth century were prolific of such indications. In 1802 an English force was thrown into Macao to protect the place on Portugal's behalf against the danger of a French attack; and although the Chinese made it perfectly clear that Macao had never been ceded to Portugal, being only rented to her, the same measure was adopted by Great Britain six years later. On this second occasion the Canton viceroy's remonstrance being disregarded, he stopped the trade and forbade the furnishing of provisions to any English ship. It is difficult to see how he could have done less. Yet an attack on Canton by the British seemed imminent at one moment of this complication, and was only averted by the vacillation of the Admiral. To effect military occupation of a portion of a friendly State's territory, and then to threaten an act of open warfare because the State's officials decline to admit the propriety of the occupation, — these are proceedings which would create some surprise were

they adopted in Europe. But China being their victim, no one found them at all abnormal. They had a consistent sequel. In 1814 a British man-of-war "exercised a very active blockade against the American merchantmen in the Canton River." In April she captured an American ship and carried her into port there. In May her boats chased an American schooner from Macao up the river to the vicinity of Canton and captured her; whereat the Americans in turn armed their boats and retook her. In short, the river below Canton was converted into a battle-ground. It was as though Russian and German squadrons were to enter the Mersey and engage each other within sight of Liverpool. The Chinese called upon the representative of the East India Company to send away the disturber of the peace, and when he, as usual, pleaded inability, they adopted the device of making things uncomfortable for the Company's Factory by obstructing the employment of native servants and molesting the cargo-boats. The reader will expect to hear that some steps were taken to conciliate the justly aggrieved Chinese. On the contrary, they were treated as the offending party. What is still stranger, the weapon employed against them was voluntary stoppage of the trade they were charged with obstructing, and the withdrawal from Canton of the traders they were supposed to despise and dislike; and what is strangest of all, "this step had the effect of completely curing the obstinacy

of the viceroy" and winning from him various valuable concessions, such as the privilege of corresponding with the local Government "under seal and in the Chinese language," a thing never previously permitted; a pledge that no Chinese official should ever enter the British Factory without leave from the inmates; an engagement that native servants should at all times be free to enter the service of Englishmen and other points. The whole story is a string of paradoxes, — the river at Canton converted into an arena of belligerent operations by British and American ships; the Chinese remonstrating against such a flagrant disregard of international law and being told placidly that it could not be cured and must be endured; their attempts to assert their national rights by hampering the trade; the foreign merchants retaliating by stopping the trade altogether; and finally the Chinese, who were the wronged party throughout, being compelled to make many concessions in order that the foreigner might consent to resume the business which alone held him in Canton. Need it be added that these concessions were declared to be "the only security against a breach of faith on the part of the Chinese," and that this series of bizarre incidents was considered "to prove that the commercial interests of the British nation in China were exposed to the utmost hazard from the chance of perpetual interruption at the will of a capricious and despotic set of delegates who kept the Court of Peking in

profound ignorance of their own oppressive and arbitrary conduct towards the Company's trade"? No page of history could be more comically consistent from first to last.

To establish an imperial court of appeal from the "capricious and despotic" local officials in Canton, another embassy was sent to Peking in 1816 under Lord Amherst. Its early experiences were a repetition of those of the Macartney mission in 1792, — courteous receptions and a seemingly friendly welcome. But Lord Macartney's coming had not been heralded by a series of events such as those reported to Peking from Canton on the eve of Lord Amherst's arrival. The Chinese Government had probably learned by 1816 that foreign intercourse as then conducted was quite inconsistent with the preservation of tranquillity, and there are also good reasons for believing that England's expansion in India alarmed and offended them, as she had just won victories in regions overrun twenty-four years previously by the troops of the Middle Kingdom. Nevertheless it is now certain not only that the Emperor (Kiaking) was quite willing to receive the British ambassador, but also that the hour of audience was actually fixed. Lord Amherst, however, considered that his dignity would be compromised if he acceded to the rapidity with which the Chinese officials sought to introduce him to the Palace. Highly inconvenient, if not wilfully unseeming, haste had been observed in

conducting him over the last eighty miles of his journey, — from Tientsin to Peking, — and on arrival the officials would have led him at once to the imperial presence, without giving him time to don his uniform or marshal his presents. Inferring an intentional insult, he refused to go before the Throne until more leisurely methods were adopted, and the Emperor inferring an intentional insult from his refusal, ordered that he should be sent back to Canton at once. Not unnaturally this result evoked severe criticism in England, and strong animadversion from historians. One eminent authority ascribed it to the "ignorance, pride, isolation, and mendacity" of the Chinese. But the true explanation of the whole affair may be embodied in one word, "mismanagement." The mission had actually reached Peking before the Emperor was informed of its intended visit and, when informed, he seems to have assumed that due preparations had already been made. Therefore he found it inexplicable that Lord Amherst should refuse an immediate audience, especially as the question of obeisance had been settled in accord with the envoy's wishes. There must always be an element of conjecture in interpreting the incidents of Europe's early relations with China. Very possibly the Chinese officials who stood between the Throne and the British ambassador on this occasion, did not at first wish that an audience should be granted, their prejudices having been justly

excited by the reports received from Canton. But in the end they were honestly desirous of obeying the Emperor's commands, for they rightly foresaw that the consequences of failure would fall on their own heads. That is precisely what happened. The Emperor severely punished his brother-in-law, who had been chiefly responsible for the bungling, but at the same time he evinced his resentment at Lord Amherst's attitude by suggesting in a letter to the King of England that the further sending of envoys would be unnecessary.

Lord Amherst's stay in China lasted five months, and was supposed to have cost the Government of that country as much as had been expended on Lord Macartney's reception. When his lordship reached Canton on his return journey, he found that the British frigate *Alceste*, which was to carry him home, had been occupied firing on the Chinese flotilla and bombarding the Chinese forts during his absence in the interior. The *Alceste*, having been assigned by the local officials to a berth so far down the river as to suggest an intentional insult, moved up "very leisurely," and when this open defiance of lawfully constituted authority drew upon her some futile fire from the Chinese war-junks and the forts, she "silenced the former with a shot," and "sent the garrison of the latter scampering" with a broadside. The custom of the foreigner in those days was to do the thing that was right in his own eyes, and to

vindicate his views of propriety by an appeal to force if the Chinese attempted to object. The *Alceste* acted in faithful accord with precedent. Still it is unusual to read in history that while an ambassador is visiting the court of a friendly country the ship by which he reached her shores is engaged in acts of warfare against her fleet and her forts. The Chinese, however, seem to have been fortified by experience against any display of undue surprise.

Thirteen comparatively uneventful years followed this abortive mission. They were not without evidences, however, that the long series of violences and arbitrarinesses had borne fruit among the Chinese people. In two consecutive years — 1820 and 1821 — bands of natives armed with stones, bamboos, or spears made fierce attacks on watering parties of British sailors. It will never be known exactly what events were the proximate causes of these encounters, but they showed that a new mood was beginning to sway the hitherto pacific natives of Canton. In connection with these and other disturbances the usual conflicts of jurisdiction declared themselves, and as a consequence the Chinese sought to draw tighter than ever the reins restricting foreign intercourse. Native servants were placed under surveillance; foreign merchants forbidden to live in Canton except during the business season, to pass beyond the limits of the Factory when residing there, or to bring their wives to the city; licenses had to

be obtained for moving up or down the river, and an extension of authority was given to the Hong Merchants. That Chinese officials should have derived from experience a conviction of the necessity for such measures is not surprising, but the system naturally proved painfully irksome to Europeans and Americans, who regarded the Chinese with open contempt and resented any exercise of authority by them.

Partly desirous of evading these restrictions and partly impelled by sanguine estimates formed in England, the East India Company made a final effort in 1832 to extend the tradal area beyond Canton. They fitted up a vessel "suitably" by loading her with miscellaneous goods, giving her a simulated character, and investing her officers with fictitious titles. "No device of ingenuity or enterprise was spared to dispose of the goods and to establish a traffic with the natives," writes Sir J. F. Davis. "These showed a very hospitable disposition towards the strangers; but all commerce was effectually prevented by the mandarins, except in one or two trivial instances. Some of the officers of government were civil and forbearing, and even accepted small presents; others less condescending were fairly bullied by the people in the *Amherst*, their junks boarded or their doors knocked down and their quarters invaded." The expedition proved a complete failure. Chinese officials, being under strict orders not to permit foreign commerce outside Canton, obeyed instruc-

tions and did their duty in spite of the deception and violence practised against them.

A central fact of the above narrative is that the nations engaged in commerce at Canton were not recognised by China as her equals. They, indeed, looked down upon her in turn with loftier disdain than they were ever required to brook at her hands. But whereas their contempt for her civilisation and her power could only be displayed by acts of violence which helped to confirm her estimate of their rude inferiority, she, on her side, was in a position to hold them at arm's length, to refuse all communication with them except through the medium of a limited body of her own merchants whom she held responsible for their conduct, and to insist that in addressing her officials they should not only rely on the intervention of these merchants, but should also employ the phraseology of petitioners, just as Chinese subjects were required to do. Such relations, though liable to frequent disturbance, were probably the best possible under the circumstances. But their uninterrupted maintenance plainly depended on the absence of any official element on the foreign side. Whenever a British man-of-war appeared upon the scene, her officers' refusal to adopt a subservient attitude created trouble seldom settled without an interchange of cannon-balls. Hence when, in 1834, the British Government decided not to renew the charter of the East India Company, and when, in consequence of that decision, the purely commercial

agents of the company who had hitherto managed affairs at Canton, were replaced by three "Superintendents of Trade," appointed under the royal sign-manual of Great Britain and possessing status and powers which entitled them to communicate direct with the highest Chinese officials, it is evident that the old system became at once unpractical. The agents of the East India Company, whose paramount object was to transmit a handsome profit to their board of directors in London, might be content to rank with Chinese merchants, and to rely solely on the latter's good offices for facilities to conduct their trade; but officials holding their commissions direct from the British Crown were obliged to claim different treatment and to seek different channels of communication.

In making this radical change the British Government showed strange precipitancy. Had there been question of dealing with a State recognised as participating in the rights and obligations of international law, the new policy would have been duly intimated to the ruler of that State and his consent would have been regarded as an essential preliminary. China, however, not being recognised as such a State by Great Britain, Lord Napier, the chief of the three "Superintendents," was sent out to Canton without any previous notice whatever to the Chinese Government. His instructions were simply to communicate by letter with the viceroy at Canton, and while "protecting and fostering the trade," to "ascertain whether

there might not be a practicability of extending it."

But although China was thus regarded as being outside the pale of international usages, she did not so regard herself. The authorities at Canton refused to have any direct relations with Lord Napier. They declared, with obvious justification, that pending instruction from the Emperor it was not within their competence to recognise the delegate of a foreign State. A strange *impasse* ensued. Lord Napier vainly sought to convey his letter to the viceroy of Canton without employing the Hong Merchants as media. But no one would transmit the missive ; its superscription did not comply with the prescribed formula of humility. Moreover, when Lord Napier, ignoring the rule which excluded all but tradesmen from the Factory of Canton, took up his residence there and eliminated the Hong Merchants from the machinery of intercourse, the viceroy declined to sanction the continuance of commerce under novel conditions not previously approved by his sovereign. The proclamations he issued on this occasion, the memorials he submitted to the Throne, the instructions he addressed to the Hong Merchants in connection with the complication, all betrayed an offensive conviction of the ineffable superiority of China to other nations, a silly show of haughty indifference to commerce, its gains and its losses, and an impertinent repudiation of the idea that any foreign official

should have the assurance to "desire intercourse, to and fro, by documents and letters with the officers of the Central Flowery Land." His Excellency's language derived an additionally insulting tone from the vagaries of an English sinologue whose translation of the term applied by the viceroy to Lord Napier was "barbarian eye," and who made the Chinese magnate refer frequently to foreigners as "barbarians." It may be stated here once for all that the Chinese term habitually translated "barbarian" has in reality no such significance. Precisely the same term used to be commonly employed in Japan and is still commonly employed, and there, too, it has often been regarded as the equivalent of "barbarian." Of course, both Chinese and Japanese vocabularies do include the term "barbarian," and in both countries there have been many supercilious applications of it to outside peoples. But the ideograph used by the Canton viceroy to describe Lord Napier's official title and to designate his lordship's nationals was not "barbarian." The viceroy spoke of Lord Napier as the "alien inspector" and of Lord Napier's countrymen as "aliens." [1] That was the sum of his offence against the rules of politeness. Lord Napier, in a despatch to Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, dubbed the viceroy "a presumptuous savage," accused him of "base conduct," and declared that he cared nothing for

[1] See Appendix, note 22.

commerce "so long as he received his pay and plunder." His lordship did more too. He appealed in the Chinese language to the Chinese people against their rulers. He published a document charging the viceroy with "ignorance and obstinacy," and affirming that he "would find it as easy to stop the current of the Canton River as to carry into effect the insane determination of the Hong." It might be difficult, as between the two dignitaries, to award the palm of civilised courtesy and prudence in this particular instance.

Thereafter a friendly adjustment became impossible. The viceroy not only stopped the trade, but also ordered natives and foreigners to boycott Lord Napier, and interdicted communication between the Factory and the shipping in the river. Thus deprived of provisions and of native servants and seeing his residence guarded by native soldiers, Lord Napier summoned a detachment of marines and directed two British frigates to sail up to the anchorage below the city. It had become a familiar spectacle in the Pearl River to see British men-of-war running the gauntlet of the Bocca Tigris [1] forts and exchanging with them a cannonade that usually involved little loss of life on either side. The *Imogene* and the *Andromache* repeated this performance on the 7th of September, 1834, and on the 9th passed within pistol-shot of Tiger Island, "knocking the stones about the ears of the garrison." A week later Lord

[1] See Appendix, note 23.

Napier decided to leave Canton rather than cause a continued suspension of trade, and moving down to Macao, he died within a month. Immediately on his departure from Canton the trade was resumed, but for some years the British superintendent, making no fresh attempt to establish direct relations with the viceroys, lived quietly in Macao or at Lintin, a small island between the former settlement and the entrance of the Canton River; an island already notorious as the basis of opium-smuggling operations destined ultimately to cause a great war.

The life of foreigners in Canton now presented many unpleasant features. Access to the city, or, speaking more correctly, to the Factory, where the foreign warehouses and residences stood, was limited to persons having commercial business there, and the period of sojourn was supposed not to extend beyond the conclusion of such business. The buildings forming the Factory belonged to the Hong Merchants, who were held responsible for the behaviour of their foreign inmates, among whom ladies must not be included. No European or American could even hire a native servant without obtaining him through a comprador. Freedom of movement was also greatly restricted. The Factory buildings covered an area of about a quarter of a mile, and in front of them was an esplanade measuring perhaps a hundred yards by fifty. There the foreigner was supposed to take air and exercise, among a host of "barbers,

fortune-tellers, vendors of dogs and cats, quack medicines and trinkets," as well as inquisitive idlers who came to observe the alien and his abode. "Adjoining the Factory were two rows of native houses, called new and old China-street, where foreigners might ramble and purchase trinkets; and if they could endure crowds and confusion with the chance of being pushed down, they might stroll through the narrow streets of the suburbs. Another mode of recreation was the pleasure of rowing European boats up and down a crowded river, where the stranger was in continual danger of being upset by large Chinese barges bearing down upon him without warning; while no one made the smallest effort to save those who might be precipitated into the water. Should he land at any given spot, up or down the river, he was always liable to be stoned or bambooed by the natives, when they were strong or mischievous enough to attempt it. The Government did, indeed, allow foreigners to take a trip in parties of eight or ten about once a month to the flower gardens which lay three miles up the river; but this indulgence was so pompously given and of such little worth that few availed themselves of it. Insult was another evil which foreigners were obliged to endure whilst resident in Canton. . . . On passing through the suburbs of Canton, or up and down the river, the cry of 'foreign devil' saluted the ear on every side; even mothers might be seen teaching their infants to

point and shout the offensive epithet as the stranger passed by. Some would even go out of their way or desist from their work to gratify their railing propensities. . . . Those who understood these abusive epithets felt them the more keenly, and it required no little forbearance to restrain the temper and pass the assailants unnoticed. It has been urged that the people of Canton had been so long accustomed to call foreigners 'devils' that they scarcely knew when they did it; but this excuse is by no means tenable, for the Chinese employed the term with a zest and emphasis indicative of an intention to annoy. They even accompanied it with a chirping noise, which they supposed to be the cry of devils, and varied the epithet so as to leave no doubt of their real meaning. They never employed the term to their own countrymen except when highly offended and disgusted."

This description is quoted from the works of Mr. W. H. Medhurst. It was written in 1835, and it embodies his own experiences at Canton. In addition to its interest as the account of an eyewitness, it derives vicarious value from another record penned by the same author showing the conditions that he found existing at the same era in a different part of China. At the time of Mr. Medhurst's visit foreign trade was illegal in any part of the Empire except Canton, and foreigners were forbidden to travel in the interior. Christian missionaries, however, were not deterred

AN OLD PAVED MEDIEVAL CLOSE LEADING FOR
FOOT PASSENGERS ONLY.

AN OLD PAVED MOUNTAIN PASS INTENDED FOR FOOT PASSENGERS ONLY.

by such vetoes. An expedition was led by Mr. Medhurst in 1835 and another by Mr. Gutzlaff in 1837, and from the accounts published by these two propagandists, accurate information may be obtained concerning the disposition of the Chinese people towards foreigners in districts remote from Canton. It is unnecessary to follow the travellers through all their wanderings. A few very brief references will suffice. Mr. Medhurst sums up the results of his expedition in these words: "Thus we have gone through various parts of four provinces and many villages, giving away about eighteen thousand volumes, of which six thousand were portions of the Scriptures, among a cheerful and willing people without meeting with the least aggression or injury; having been always received by the people with a cheerful smile, and most generally by the officers with politeness and respect." They were not greeted with cries of "barbarian" or "foreign devil," nor did they observe anywhere the least inclination to molest them. Very seldom did the local officials seek to restrict their movements. One example of such interference may be cited. Having been invited to a meeting with a civil and a military officer, Mr. Medhurst and his companion were informed by the latter that "the orders from the Court were to treat foreigners with kindness and liberality, wherever and whenever they came, but by no means to allow them to stay and propagate their opinions.

In conformity with this order they had provided a liberal present for us" — ten pigs, ten sheep, some bags of flour, two of peas and two of millet, with a number of ducks and fowls — "with which he hoped we would be content to depart, and by no means touch on any other part of the coast, for if we did, he was not sure that we should be treated so well elsewhere. They had now shown us every mark of politeness and hoped we would be equally polite in return by getting immediately under weigh and by touching nowhere else in the province of Shantung, all of which was under their jurisdiction." It does not appear to have occurred to Mr. Medhurst that, although a minister of the gospel and therefore specially required to respect lawfully constituted authority and to promote the preservation of peace and good order, he was under any obligation to observe the injunctions of these courteous officials. He therefore prosecuted his journey just as though no such encounter had taken place, calling wherever he pleased along the coast and wandering at will through the country. And as to the nature of his conduct, when dealing with local officials a few days later, the following extract deserves to be quoted: —

> The day following we went on shore at Tsing-hai and were met on our way by a mandarin in a boat who beckoned us to come to him, but disregarding his signs, we pulled towards the land. A number of people were assembled on the beach who received us in a friendly

manner, and as soon as we had ascended the cliff, the mandarin from the boat approached us. His natural cheerfulness overcame his first alarm, and he asked us in a very civil way who we were and whence we came. We told him that we came from the west to distribute good books for the instruction of the age, and with his leave would give him one. He took the book and said our object was good, but hoped that in prosecuting it we would make no disturbance. We assured him that we should not, but on the contrary endeavour to keep the peace. We then gave out books to the bystanders, who received them with eagerness, but at the same time with quietness. . . . The mandarin then said that we were guests and should be treated with respect, for which reason he proposed that we should repair to a temple hard by, where the officers would assemble and treat us with tea. Upon this we all proceeded thither, dealing out our stores as we went along. But finding a path that led directly to the town, we left the temple on the left and made towards the dwellings of the inhabitants. This the mandarin strongly opposed, saying it would lead to trouble: but heedless of his remonstrances we pushed forward. Arrived at the gate of the town, he again attempted to dissuade us from our purpose, without success; so that after having passed through one street and finding us not to be wrought upon by his suggestions, in order to save his dignity in the eyes of the people, he left us and went away.

In how many countries of the world would strangers have been thus allowed to openly disobey the laws of the land and flout the exercise of official authority, and in how many countries would they have been treated with courtesy and forbearance under such circumstances? Mr.

Medhurst was able to write: "On quitting Shantung it may be proper to observe that we have nowhere been roughly used or ill-treated, while the natives have been uniformly found harmless and peaceable," but it is certainly remarkable that a man of such eminent piety and benevolence did not appreciate the provocative influence of his own methods. Mr. Gutzlaff penetrated farther into the interior in 1837. He too found everywhere a cheerful, polite reception, and the mandarins left him severely alone. His verdict was: "The farther from the coast, the more the moral condition of the people appears to improve, and the greater the interest they take in our books."

Every reader must be at once struck by the fact that while the people in and about Canton were calling foreigners "devils" and stoning or bambooing them whenever opportunity offered, the people in other districts treated them with courtesy, geniality, respect, and even friendship. How is the difference to be explained? Can there be any doubt about the explanation? Precisely the same experience has had to be recorded in Japan. At the open ports and in their vicinity children frequently address opprobrious epithets to foreigners, and persons of the lower orders occasionally display towards them a mien rude if not truculent, whereas in the interior of the country the stranger can count with absolute certainty on a smiling welcome and the most graceful courtesy.

In each country cognate causes have produced corresponding consequences. Japan having closed her doors against Occidentals after a brief experience of their religious intolerance, sectarian squabbles, and mutual jealousies, and having with fierce and relentless determination asserted her right to remain excluded, never had a Canton to furnish, during two centuries, object lessons in the deterrent features of foreign intercourse. The imprisonment of the Dutch in Nagasaki was so complete and effectual that they had no contact with the citizens of the neighbouring town, nor had their ships' crews any opportunity of being "supplied on the cheapest terms with ardent spirits of native manufacture, generally adulterated with ingredients of a stimulating and maddening quality,"[1] under the influence of which they might perpetrate outrages and violences such as those for which Canton, Macao and their environs became notorious. Thus it fell out that during the eras antecedent to renewal of foreign intercourse in the nineteenth century, no antipathy for Occidentals was created in the breasts of the people of Japan as distinguished from the military class. The latter, believing the man from the West to be a plotter against their country's independence, conceived a deep aversion for him, and held it a patriotic duty to exclude him. But the mass of the people had little in common with that sentiment, and consequently, so soon as the soldier

[1] See Appendix, note 24.

(*samurai*) laid aside his political hatred, — which he could easily do as it was an affair of the head rather than of the heart, — the whole nation, to the bewilderment of the world, was found to be an unit in its amicable mood towards foreigners. Gradually, however, a change began to be observable. Japanese frequenting the foreign settlements, or living sufficiently near them to derive impressions of the stranger from actual contact with him, mistook for innate boorishness his comparative indifference to forms and ceremonies, or erroneously accepted as an indication of his general character the violences and excesses perpetrated too frequently by dissolute representatives of his race. On the other hand, the foreigner misinterpreted much that he saw in Japan. Habits and acts which in the eyes of the Japanese had the sanction of nature and common sense, were construed by the foreigner as evidences of the demoralised condition they would necessarily accompany in his own country, and, his treatment of the people being governed by this false estimate of their morals, they, in turn, saw in his license of speech and demeanour an index of depravity. Thus each painted for himself a misleading portrait of the other, and it resulted that in regions where direct intercourse prompted these erring conceptions, the foreigner, already masterful and intolerant of everything Oriental, became either offensively familiar or contemptuously exclusive, which treatment the lower orders

of Japan resented by displays of rudeness and even truculence entirely strange to their disposition. It was thus that there came to be witnessed in the settlements and their vicinity a state of affairs differing from that observable in the interior, and the writings of men like Medhurst, Gutzlaff, Stanhope, Hunter, and Davis show that this was doubly true of China in times immediately prior to the treaty-making era. The natives in and about Canton and Macao reviled the foreigner whenever he ventured among them, stoned him or belaboured him with bamboos, whereas the natives in places which he had not previously frequented, received him with a smiling welcome, shared their frugal fare with him, and showed him uniform civility. The story of events at Canton and Macao from the beginning of the sixteenth century until nearly the middle of the nineteenth offers an easy explanation of the temper gradually educated among the Chinese in that region, and it will be seen by-and-by that a similar retrospect presents itself at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Chapter VI

PRECONVENTIONAL PERIOD

(*Continued*)

ALTHOUGH the commercial intercourse between China and the outer world during the early part of the nineteenth century suffered frequent interruptions of a temporary nature, and although no treaty or convention limited the charges imposable by the Chinese on the export and import of commodities, the business grew steadily in volume and prosperity, until, at the close of the East India Company's monopoly in 1834, "the China trade" was regarded in England as one of the most important of her oversea enterprises. That fact deserves a prominent place in the record. The Chinese might have put an end to the trade at any moment. They might have crushed it under a load of duties or they might have adopted more direct means of destroying it. But they did neither the one thing nor the other, and it is therefore impossible to endorse the charge frequently preferred against them that at heart they desired to terminate a commerce

which in fact they not only tolerated but even encouraged.

On the other hand, the relations between foreign traders and Chinese officialdom were of an eminently unsatisfactory kind. No efficient machinery existed for preserving order, checking abuses, or punishing crime on the part of foreigners, nor had the latter access to any competent court of appeal against the exactions of local officials or the insults and assaults of truculent natives. That there were wrongs on both sides, and even that the balance of wrong was largely on the foreign side, will be gathered from what has been written above. But without attempting to cast up the account accurately, it is evident that a commerce subject to such violent and arbitrary dislocations could not fail to become more and more inconsistent with the civilisation of the nineteenth century, and would have required radical readjustment even though no other evil had been associated with it. There was such an evil, however; an evil that increased in dimensions and in flagrancy from the beginning of the century, finally culminating in a war which has probably been more condemned and more condoned, more denounced and more defended, than any incident in history.

An exhaustive essay on "The Poppy in China," compiled by the eminent sinologue Dr. Edkins, shows that the plant is mentioned in several Chinese books from the eighth century onwards.

It seems to have been introduced by the Arabs, and to have been prized at first solely for the beauty of its flowers, which ranked next to the peony in Chinese estimation. Its medicinal qualities were recognised from the tenth century, but not until some seven hundred years later did the vice now associated with the name of the drug begin to attract attention. About the year 1620 tobacco was brought to China from the Philippines, then under Spanish rule. Attempts to prohibit its use were quickly made, but no success attended them. After a time opium began to be included among various ingredients mixed with the "smoke weed" for experimental purposes. Amoy being then the principal port of entry for goods from Manila, the tobacco plant soon began to be cultivated there, and there, too, a century later, as well as in Formosa, the smoking of opium attained vicious proportions, the drug being imported from Java. The attention of the Pekin Government having been drawn to the abuse, a commissioner was sent to make investigations. In his report he accurately described the apparatus for smoking; said that in the case of the aborigines, who smoked as an aid to vice, the limbs, growing thin, appeared to be wasting away, and added that persons addicted to the habit could not be deterred by anything short of death. Another work, published about the same time and translated by Dr. Edkins, said: "The opium is boiled in a copper pan. The pipe

used for smoking is in appearance like a small club. Depraved young men without any fixed occupation used to meet together by night to smoke: it grew to be a custom with them. . . . In order to tempt new smokers to come, no charge was made for the first time. After some time they could not stay away and would come even if they forfeited all their property. Smokers were able to remain awake the whole night, and rejoiced as an aid to sensual indulgence. Afterwards they found themselves beyond the possibility of cure. If for one day they omitted smoking, their faces suddenly became shrivelled, their lips opened, their teeth were seen, they lost all vivacity and seemed ready to die. Another smoke, however, restored them. After three years all such persons die. . . . This habit has entered China about ten or more years. There are many smokers in Amoy. . . . It is truly sad to reflect on this."

With this information before it, the Chinese Government issued, in 1729, an edict prohibiting the sale of opium and the keeping of opium dens. The legislation adopted was peculiar in that it imposed no penalty whatever on the opium-smoker: he was apparently judged to have punished himself sufficiently. The persons held chiefly responsible were the seller of the drug and the keeper of an opium den. The former had to carry the cangue for a month prior to banishment; the latter was strangled after a cer-

tain term of imprisonment, his assistants being bambooed and transported. So too every one connected with the carriage or import of the drug, and every official responsible for its admission or circulation, became liable to severe punishment.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the drafters of these drastic laws were in earnest, or that they regarded opium-smoking as a vice destructive alike of the physique and of the morale. It is to be observed, too, that the vetoes were enacted long before any question had arisen between the Chinese Government and the importers of the drug: no such question presented itself seriously until the nineteenth century. But whether the prohibitory edicts emanating from Peking became practically operative in the provinces, there seem to be no means of determining conclusively. There do not exist, so far as is publicly known, any records of punishments inflicted under the law, and the drug continued to be imported, paying a duty of only a pound sterling, approximately, per chest (133 lbs.). Nominally the imported drug was intended for medicinal purposes alone, and under that pretext the quantity arriving at Canton increased steadily from 200 chests in 1730 to 1,000 chests in 1767. The trade was then entirely in the hands of the Portuguese. But in 1773, after the conquest of Bengal by Clive, English merchants began to interest themselves in the article, and in 1781 the

East India Company undertook the whole business in India. It is easy to conceive that so long as the importation did not increase with conspicuous rapidity, the drug continued to obtain admittance as medicine. But by and by the quantity became too large for that subterfuge.

Then bribes were used, and as the Chinese official has to eke out an insufficient salary by his wits, importers of opium found no difficulty in eluding the prohibitory laws. A record shows that a picul of silk and a chest of opium had the same market value at Canton in 1755, the drug commanding then only one-half of its present price. It is not possible to determine the exact quantity of opium that entered China ports prior to the virtual monopoly of the trade established by the East India Company. But a document compiled by a British merchant in Canton in 1782, and subsequently laid before Parliament, says: "The importation of opium to China is forbidden on very severe penalties: the opium on seizure is burned; the vessel in which it is brought to the port confiscated, and the Chinese in whose possession it is found for sale is punishable with death. It might be concluded that with a law so rigid no foreigners would venture to import, nor any Chinese dare to purchase, this article. Yet opium for a long course of time has been annually carried to China, and often in large quantities, both by our country's vessels and those of the Portuguese. It is sometimes landed at

Macao and sometimes at Whampoa, though equally liable to the above penalties in either port, as the Portuguese are, so to say, entirely under the Chinese rule. That this contraband trade has hitherto been carried on without incurring the penalties of the law is owing to the excess of corruption in the executive part of the Chinese Government. . . . In the year 1780 a new Viceroy was appointed to the Government of Canton; this man had the reputation of an upright, bold, and rigid Minister. I was informed that he had information of these illicit practices and was resolved to take cognisance of them."

Thus, at the close of the eighteenth century, opium-smoking, after some sixty years of gradual growth, had assumed almost the dimensions of a national vice in China. Apprised of the fact not only by reports from the provinces but also by direct observation in Peking, the Government issued a new prohibitory edict. Its only effect was to increase smuggling. The smugglers did not encounter any serious obstacles. They were well aware of the law's provisions and of the severe penalties enacted against the use of the drug, but, on the other hand, they found the Chinese officials perfectly facile. Not only did many of the latter themselves indulge in the vicious practice, thus becoming morally incompetent to check it among the people, but also they derived an important accession of personal revenue by

exacting fees and douceurs from the importers. Another consideration also influenced them: the smugglers let it be plainly seen that they intended to defy the law as well as to evade it. So long as the principal dépôt of the trade was at Macao, no very flagrant acts of violence were connected with it. But when Portuguese exactions drove it from that place in 1822, the smugglers took virtual possession of a small island called Lintin, which lay between Macao and the mouth of the Canton River. There their boats lay, heavily armed and openly indifferent to official control. On several occasions Chinese subjects were shot from these boats, but the native officials had no power to exact redress, and even though they had possessed such power, their own participation in the secret profits of the trade must have paralysed their authority. Under these circumstances an arrangement was subsequently made for levying a fixed charge on each chest of the drug and dividing the proceeds among all officials concerned, from the viceroy downwards. It is related that this hush money was paid regularly from month to month, sometimes in silver but more frequently in the drug itself.

Of course illegal practices at one place encouraged evasions elsewhere. The corrupt complaisance of the Canton authorities induced foreigners to believe that the vetoes against general trade at other ports might be similarly

eluded, and several attempts were made to extend the sphere of commercial operations to points along the eastern coast. These essays were usually unsuccessful except in the matter of opium, for which a market could always be found on a more or less limited scale.

So long as the East India Company controlled the bulk of the trade with China, some small semblance of order was maintained even in the realm of bribery and corruption. Not that the company actually trafficked in opium. That is one of the curious features of the story. The directors of the great corporation, recognising the capacities of the Chinese market for opium, manufactured the drug in India with express reference to Chinese taste and derived an immense revenue from its export. But they never carried an ounce of it in their own vessels after the close of the eighteenth century. Private adventurers were left to manage that part of the business. Thus the officers of the company in Canton and its board of directors in London could always, with some semblance of sincerity, profess a desire to respect the laws of China. But although nominally standing aloof from the opium trade and its lawless methods, the company's orderly and powerful influence was felt in that realm also; and thus, as its authority grew weaker in the closing years of its chartered existence, while, on the other hand, vicious indulgence in the poison claimed a constantly in-

OLD ARCHED BRIDGE IN WESTERN CHINA ON THE BORDER
OF TIBET.

OLD ARCHED BRIDGE IN WESTERN CHINA ON THE BORDER OF THIBET.

creasing number of victims with a corresponding development of the demand for the drug, the circumstances under which the smuggling trade was conducted at Lintin assumed a more and more intolerable character. Shootings of Chinese from smuggling boats became frequent occurrences. The natives on their side retaliated by exacting bloody vengeance for these murders. A British subject set fire to a mandarin's house and actually boasted of the fact in the public press. Armed boats from the opium ships made an organised attack on a village. Renewed efforts, avowedly founded on the licence enjoyed at Canton, were organised to extend the trade in other directions by intimidation. In short, the situation gradually and steadily tended towards a disastrous issue.

A forcible account of the state of affairs prevailing in Canton at that epoch was placed on record by one of the British residents at the Factories: "Life and business were a conundrum as insoluble as the Sphinx: everything worked smoothly by acting in direct opposition to what we were told to do. . . . We were threatened and re-threatened with the 'direst penalties' if we sold foreign mud (opium) to the people; truly forbearance could no longer be exercised. Yet we continued to sell the drug as usual. Our receiving ships at Lintin must no longer loiter at that anchorage, but forthwith either come into port or return to their respec-

tive countries! The heart of the ruler of all within the Four Seas was indeed full of compassion and had been indulgent to the barbarians. But now no more delay could be granted. 'Cruisers would be sent to open their irresistible broadsides' upon the foreign ships. Yet in spite of these terrors the ships never budged. We were 'forbidden to wander about except three times a month and that not without a linguist,' but we walked wherever we pleased and the linguist was the last person we saw." In short, Chinese regulations and Chinese instructions were systematically ignored or violated. It cannot be reasonably supposed, though it has often been stated, that for this spirit of contemptuous defiance the Chinese themselves were primarily responsible owing to their venal laxity in enforcing the laws against opium. Something must doubtless be attributed to that default, and something also to the constitutional forbearance which makes them refrain from the employment of force even in emergencies where its exercise is essential. But the radical explanation is to be sought in the Occidental's sense of lofty superiority to everything Oriental, and in his incapacity to tolerate any restraint imposed upon his freedom by an eastern nation.

Those things were recorded in 1838, four years after the expiration of the East India Company's charter; the very year when Captain Elliot, British Chief Superintendent at Canton,

wrote officially to London that "the immense and, it must be said, the most unfortunate, increase of the supply [of opium] during the last four years, the rapid growth of the east-coast trade in the drug, and the continued drain of silver have no doubt greatly alarmed the Chinese Government." In fact, the termination of the East India Company's monopoly and the full opening of the China trade to private enterprise resulted in a great development of opium import, and also brought about another result, namely, that instead of discharging their cargo into receiving ships at Lintin to be carried thence up the river by Chinese craft, the foreign traders began to transport it to Canton in armed boats of their own. This altered state of affairs forced itself upon the attention of the Chinese authorities. The abuse became too notorious to be connived at locally or ignored by the Central Government. Peking had to reconsider the whole matter, not as a comparatively simple and almost abstract problem, but as a question involving issues of immediate gravity, nationally and internationally.

Meanwhile, after Lord Napier's failure to establish direct relations with the Canton authorities, the British Superintendent adopted the policy of silence and aloofness. He retired from Canton and lived in solemn seclusion, carefully abstaining from all contact with local officialdom — a direct imitation, unconscious perhaps, of

the attitude complainingly attributed by him to the Chinese themselves. In a measure he was constrained to that course, for the British Cabinet, not discerning any exit from the *impasse* other than an appeal to arms, which, to their honour be it said, they were always most anxious to avoid, left the superintendent without any definite instructions except that reference to London must precede any attempt to open communications with the Peking Court. This period of interrupted intercourse continued for two and a half years. The trade was not affected: it went on as briskly and as profitably as ever. But there were no official, or even quasi-official, relations.

Meanwhile the Canton authorities, conscious that in the absence of some recognised control complications of a serious nature might occur at any moment, issued two edicts, one calling upon the British merchants to elect a temporary superintendent competent to discharge the functions hitherto performed by the principal representative of the East India Company; the other urging them to obtain the despatch from England of a governing official who should be a merchant, not a royal officer. The Chinese, in short, desired to perpetuate the old system that had existed under the regimen of the East India Company. It was very far from being a perfect system, but it had served its purpose fairly well, and it had possessed the advantage — a palpable advantage

in Chinese eyes — of keeping the lawless and masterful foreigner at arm's length by interposing the Hong Merchants between him and even local officialdom.

These edicts were quietly, not to say contemptuously, ignored. British statesmen saw no occasion to treat China with the courtesy observed in relations between Occidental Powers. They would not for a moment have entertained the notion of sending a consular official, much less a semi-diplomatic representative, to an European country without previously seeking the concurrence of its government. But in China's case no such routine seemed necessary. They would not for a moment have claimed for their nationals exemption from the jurisdiction of an European country without, at the same time, discharging the responsibility of providing some efficient substitute for that jurisdiction. Yet in China's case they were content that a number of their people should reside on her shores and there carry on a trade already marked by repeated acts of lawlessness and violence, without the existence of any recognised British authority to whom the Chinese officials might appeal for redress against wrong, or for assistance in restraining turbulence. It is true that Great Britain's irregular attempts to open relations with the Canton officials elicited an insulting and exasperating rejoinder on China's part, and led ultimately to the employment of harsh and humiliating measures. It is also true

that history cannot determine whether the attitude of China on that occasion was due chiefly to a sense of unceremonious treatment or to a determination that her isolation should not be invaded. But the initial error was assuredly on England's side, and she accentuated it subsequently by paying no attention to China's intimation that a responsible authority should be constituted. The popular song which represented Hongkong as the *ultima Thule* of the habitable world, had not yet been heard in London music halls, but Canton was counted such a remote and such an uncivilised place that really things there might very well be left to take care of themselves.

During these thirty months of interregnum the British superintendent did not attempt to return to Canton. First he resided at Macao, and afterwards he found quarters on board a cutter at Lintin among the fleet of opium vessels now assembled there to the number of about forty. Sir George Robinson was the British representative who thus took up his abode among a squadron of smuggling ships. Their propinquity does not appear to have shocked his sense of propriety in any degree. On the contrary, he found the position so good that he recommended to his Government the purchase of a small vessel to serve as a quasi-consulate, quasi-legation. By remaining at Lintin the superintendent would be beyond the reach of the

Chinese officers, and that isolation seemed desirable in the eyes of a British delegate whose prime object should have been to establish intercourse. In Chinese eyes he not only openly associated himself with the disreputable side of the trade, but was also content that no provision should be made for checking its violent abuses. "Should any unfortunate catastrophe take place," wrote Sir George from his retreat among the smugglers, "what would our position at Canton entail upon us but responsibility and jeopardy from which we are now free?" That was exactly what the smugglers also thought when they established their insular rendezvous at Lintin.

Sir George Robinson was succeeded by Captain Elliot, an official who has been the object of very severe criticism at the hands of modern writers. It has even been charged that his conciliatory methods and submissive demeanour betrayed the Chinese into acts which rendered war inevitable. Captain Elliot, though a man of much foresight, did not anticipate this harsh verdict, and consequently took little care to record indications of his political motives. What the facts appear to indicate is that the situation thoroughly alarmed him. Opium smuggling had now attained dimensions which could not be viewed without great disquiet. "The manner of the rash course of traffic within the river," he wrote, "probably contributed most of all to impress on the Chinese Government the urgent necessity of repressing

the growing audacity of the foreign smugglers, and preventing their associating themselves with the desperate and lawless of their own large cities. . . . While such a traffic existed in the heart of our regular commerce, I had all along felt that the Chinese Government had a just ground for harsh measures towards the lawful trade upon the plea that there was no distinction between the right and the wrong." It was therefore essential, he urged, that there should be a British official "vested with defined and adequate powers for the reasonable control of men whose rash conduct could not be left to the operation of Chinese laws without the utmost inconvenience and risk, and whose impunity was alike injurious to British character and dangerous to British interest." He himself could not at once assume or acquire these "defined and adequate powers;" the assistance of the British Government had to be invoked. But it doubtless seemed to Captain Elliot, as a practical man, that to revert meanwhile to the arrangement existing in the days of the East India Company, an arrangement which had worked with comparative success, would be better than to continue his predecessor's policy of severed relations. He therefore signified his willingness to communicate through the Hong Merchants as of old, and the governor for Canton readily acceding to the proposition and having obtained imperial sanction, the British superintendent resumed his resi-

dence in that city on April 12, 1837. In his despatch acknowledging the receipt of the necessary permit, Captain Elliot "respectfully assured" the governor that "it was at once his duty and his anxious desire to conform in all things to the imperial pleasure." He has been strongly condemned, first for abandoning the "masterly inactivity" of his immediate predecessors, and secondly for assuming such a demeanour towards Chinese officialdom. Yet it is plain that he was guided throughout by a sense of imperative duty, and that no conscientious official could have continued to challenge the risks of inactivity.

Meanwhile the Government in Peking, becoming sensible of the rapidly growing magnitude of the opium traffic, set itself seriously to devise a remedy. The phases under which the question presented itself were three: first, the demoralising effects of the drug upon those using it; secondly, its destructive influence upon good order by causing smuggling; and, thirdly, its injurious financial consequences as producing an outflow of specie. Concerning the last point it has to be noted that whereas the annual exports of tea, silk, and other articles of Chinese produce represented a value of about seven million pounds sterling, the imports of foreign manufactures amounted to only four millions. Hence, could opium have been eliminated, China's foreign commerce would have brought to her coffers a sum of over three millions sterling annually in

specie, whereas the inclusion of opium resulted in turning the balance of trade against her to the extent of more than a million. In the yearly exodus of such a large amount of silver and produce on account of a totally unproductive and demoralising drug, the Chinese detected a serious economical disaster, and that aspect of the problem figured prominently in the Peking discussions. Two opinions found exponents. The first, recognising that the evil had struck its roots too deeply to be eradicated, was in favour of legalising the import. Advocates of that course claimed that smuggling would thus be effectually prevented and the exodus of specie checked. At the same time they recommended immediate dismissal from office as the punishment of any official convicted of smoking, their idea being that if the upper classes were weaned from the vice, it would ultimately fall into general discredit. The second opinion condemned the trade uncompromisingly as a minister of evil, maintained that the import of the drug should not be tolerated for an instant, and urged that in severe laws unflinchingly administered lay the only effective remedy. Exponents of the latter view did not neglect the economical side of the problem, but they dwelt chiefly on its moral aspects, and their arguments had a ring of unmistakable sincerity.

Of these two views the latter was adopted in Peking, — adopted so uncompromisingly that the

principal exponent of the former was banished from the capital and condemned to work on the post roads.

Recent historians allege that politics influenced Peking's choice. The Empress, a lady of much light and learning, favoured legalising the sale of the drug. Her Majesty's enemies, therefore, took the opposite view for the sake of enmity, and the Emperor, Taou-kwang, supported their arguments, his judgment being warped by grief for the loss of his son, who had just died from the effects of the drug. That theory obtains credence among writers in whose eyes any hypothesis seems preferable to the direct assumption that opium was denounced for its own sake. Yet everything goes to indicate that the Emperor and his advisers were honestly shocked by the extent of the opium evil, and that their enactments reflected a frank sense of duty. They did not commit themselves to prohibition without taking wide counsel. All the principal provincial authorities were consulted, and their virtually unanimous vote was cast in favour of abolishing the traffic.

In Canton it had been supposed for a moment that the policy of legalisation would prevail at the capital. The local officials naturally advocated that solution, and Captain Elliot welcomed the prospect with a profound sense of relief. The immense task involved in abolition presented itself in truer proportions to his mind and to theirs

than to the minds of the Peking statesmen. Soon, however, the trend of thought in the capital became known in the provinces, and the Governor of Canton adapted himself to the change by sending an order to Captain Elliot that the opium ships must be driven from Lintin and that the King of England must be desired not to suffer their return thither. There were then some fifty of these vessels under the British and American flags at the island, and there were also Portuguese-owned vessels engaged in the same smuggling trade at Macao. Captain Elliot, as his already quoted despatches show, had no sympathy with the smugglers. He recognised fully the evil effects of opium-smoking, and he saw that by systematically ignoring Chinese regulations foreigners were gradually creating an intolerable situation. But he possessed no power over any nationals except his own, and his official instincts probably suggested that even in the privilege of wrong-doing his countrymen should not be discriminated against. Moreover, he detected a political opportunity of an attractive character. The Governor of Canton had employed the Hong Merchants to transmit the Chinese Emperor's alleged message for the British sovereign to the superintendent. Captain Elliot refused to receive any such communication unless it came direct from the Chinese Government, and thus the government had no choice but to employ official messengers instead of the Hong Merchants,

a signal departure from the policy which had repulsed Lord Napier and informed the procedure of the Canton authorities for so many years. Victory here was with the British superintendent. As to the driving away of the opium ships, however, there was no result. Captain Elliot had marked his return to Canton by an acknowledgment of "duty and anxious desire to conform in all things to the imperial pleasure." An occasion now presented for evincing the honesty of that avowal. He eluded it by pleading that his commission did not extend beyond the domain of the regular trade. To the Chinese his reply must have appeared manifestly disingenuous. To himself he justified it by doubts about the sincerity of the governor's sudden access of anti-opium zeal. A British witness examined by a parliamentary committee in London some years later stated candidly, "We never paid any attention to any law in China that I recollect." He might have added with equal truth that the Chinese never seemed to pay any attention to his habitual ignoring of their regulations. Captain Elliot did not expect them to be more exacting on this occasion than they had been in the past. He was mistaken. The Chinese were now in earnest. Their measures proved it, for they tortured one of their nationals and made him stand in the pillory for participating in the opium traffic. His fate served as a warning to others of his countrymen similarly guilty, and

several of them fled from Canton. But the foreign smugglers remained indifferent. Their armed boats continued to ply up and down the river in flagrant defiance of the law. It thus becoming evident to the local authorities that still more vivid object lessons were needed, they caused a Chinese opium-dealer to be conducted to Macao and there publicly strangled, while, at the same time, other native smugglers were seized and tortured, their boats destroyed and their sales checked. Yet even these measures proved ineffectual to convince Europeans and Americans. In vain the Hong Merchants, placed between the devil and the deep blue sea, between the anger of the mandarins and the indifference of the foreigners, addressed pitiful appeals to the latter: "Lately we have repeatedly received edicts from the governor and the *Hoppo* severely reprimanding us; and we have also written to you gentlemen of the different nations several times, giving you full information of the orders and regulations that you might perfectly obey them and manage accordingly. But you, gentlemen, continue wholly regardless." In vain the boats of native smugglers were destroyed and their owners tortured or otherwise punished. In vain the retail dealers in the drug at Canton were imprisoned and those found elsewhere led thither in chains. In vain news came from Hupeh that the local officials had adopted the strong expedient of mutilating the upper lips of smokers so

as to incapacitate them for using the opium-pipe. The foreign merchants still persuaded themselves to believe what Lord Palmerston subsequently stated in Parliament, namely, that the Chinese were insincere in their attempts to check the trade, and that none wonld be more chagrined than they to see it stopped. So English and American schooners continued to deliver the drug, and the governor's preventive officers, whatever might be their zeal against native craft, shrank from attacking these heavily armed vessels.

It must be admitted that there were reasons for such doubts on the part of foreigners. During full half a century the Chinese had suffered the anti-opium laws to be violated with impunity, and it was hard to credit them with any radical change of view now, or to suspect them of imagining that a trade of such importance, sanctioned by long custom, could be exterminated at a moment's notice. The Chinese are nothing if not deliberate. Their sense of expediency is outraged by heroic or precipitate measures. It was scarcely conceivable that they should have been suddenly stirred to a white heat of destructive vehemence against a commerce which had grown by their own connivance to the great dimensions of from three to four millions sterling annually.

Occasion soon arose for the local authorities to make further display of their determination. A seizure of opium having been effected in

Canton immediately in front of a British trader's dwelling, the governor ordered the Hong Merchants to expel the trader from Canton and his ship from the river within three days. The Hong Merchants thereupon addressed themselves to the foreign Chamber of Commerce, announcing the suspension of all commerce until the importer was driven out, threatening to pull down his house unless he went, and declaring that no buildings should thenceforth be leased to any foreigner who refused to sign a bond pledging himself to abstain from all traffic in opium. This intimation produced no effect. The Chamber simply signified its inability to control the acts of any individual, and expressed sympathy with one of the Hong Merchants who had been condemned to the pillory because he happened to have guaranteed the smuggler. Of course under such circumstances an European governor would have sent a body of constables or soldiers to arrest the guilty party. But throughout the whole of this complication the Chinese authorities showed singularly patient reluctance to resort to force against foreigners. What the Governor did was to order that the first native convicted of dealing in opium should be executed in full view of the foreign factories. He still relied on impressing the "oversea men" with a sense of the heinous consequences of their lawlessness. But the foreigners, instead of being awed by the spectacle, regarded it as an intoler-

A VILLAGE ON THE RIVER BANK.

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able outrage, sallied out *en masse*, drove away the executioner and his myrmidons, and subsequently undertook to disperse with sticks a crowd of harmless natives who had assembled to view these unwonted events. The natives, however, retaliated with stones, and the foreigners, being compelled to retire into the Factories, remained there in some jeopardy until a band of Chinese soldiers dispersed the mob. "All these desperate hazards," says the official despatch of the British superintendent, "were incurred for the scrambling and comparatively insignificant gains of a few reckless individuals, unquestionably founding their conduct upon the belief that they were exempt from operation of all law, British or Chinese."

Captain Elliot was now thoroughly alarmed. He had been instructed by the British Foreign Secretary that no protection should be afforded to enable British subjects to violate the laws of the country where they traded, and that such persons must bear the consequences of the more effectual exercise of Chinese authority against them. He saw, and publicly declared, that the continuance of the opium traffic was "rapidly staining the British character with deep disgrace," and exposing the regular commerce to imminent risks, and he therefore ordered all British-owned opium-vessels to leave the river within three days, threatening that if they failed to do so he would seek Chinese co-operation to drive them out.

The smugglers, having defied native authority for years, and knowing that Captain Elliot had no power to expel them, treated his injunction with indifference. Such contingencies as the staining of British character or the perils of the regular commerce did not distress them seriously. Captain Elliot therefore executed his threat of appealing to the governor. But it will be observed that the British superintendent was only paltering with the problem. To expel the smugglers from the rivers merely meant reversion to the old system, namely, an opium depot at Lintin and a service of native craft to carry the drug to Canton. Doubtless Captain Elliot acted properly in openly dissociating himself from the lawless acts of his nationals; but in the governor's eyes half measures like the restriction of the opium-ships to their ancient rendezvous outside the river, had no serious significance. Thus, in his answer to Captain Elliot, while applauding the latter's sentiments, he indirectly ridiculed their impotence. Nevertheless something was effected, not by Captain Elliot's proclamations and appeals nor yet by the governor's menaces, but by the Hong Merchants' stoppage of general commerce. The smuggling craft gradually withdrew from the river; the British importer of the seized opium left Canton; and business resumed its ordinary course.

On the side of the Chinese authorities, however, there was no relaxation of effort. Several

petty traders in opium underwent summary punishment; one was strangled in front of the Factories; entire stoppage of commerce was threatened, and the governor continued to urge foreigners to send all opium ships from Chinese waters.

At this epoch there arrived in Canton to assume the direction of affairs a man destined to take a prominent place in the history of his country's foreign relations. This was Commissioner Lin. He had previously held high office, and he now came to Canton with plenipotentiary authority, received direct from his sovereign, to "remove from China the dire calamity" of opium. It is unnecessary to speak of his character: his acts will be found sufficiently eloquent.

When Lin reached Canton the opium trade, owing to vigorous measures already taken by the governor, as described above, had been almost suspended. But the opium ships lay at Lintin, having on board large quantities of the drug, and there could be no doubt that the interruption of the traffic was merely temporary. Lin may be supposed to have understood thoroughly the venality of his own country's officials, and from the Canton authorities he received accurate information about the defiant methods of foreigners and the absence of any one of their own nationality competent to control them, this last fact being attested by Captain Elliot's written statement that he possessed no authority outside the

realm of legitimate trade. Lin, a straightforward, resolute, and practical man, doubtless appreciated the extremely disingenuous nature of Captain Elliot's disavowal, which was as though a body of municipal administrators should state that their order-preserving functions did not extend beyond the law-abiding section of the citizens. He may even have conceived some feeling of contempt for an official who, while openly declaring that the opium traffic was "rapidly staining the British character with deep disgrace," nevertheless shrank from any drastic effort to terminate it. At all events, it must have been obvious to him that he could not count on any efficient aid from the British superintendent, and that if his sovereign's commands were to be carried out, it must be solely by Chinese exertions. Therefore, after a week's examination and reflection, he adopted a course depending solely on the exercise of his own functions. He formulated two demands: first, that all the opium stored at Lintin should be delivered to him; secondly, that the foreign merchants should sign bonds pledging themselves never again to import opium under penalty of confiscation and capital punishment. In order to secure assent to these demands, he took measures to sever communication between the shipping and the foreigners in Canton, so that the latter were virtually confined in the Factories, and he declared that only three days would be allowed for consideration.

On the day previous to the expiration of the period of delay, the foreign Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Hong Merchants promising a definite reply in four days, and stating that "the absolute necessity of the foreign residents of Canton having nothing to do with the opium traffic" was "almost unanimously" recognised.

Events now moved rapidly. Commissioner Lin had no inclination to palter. He declared that unless the opium was given up, two of the principal Hong Merchants should be beheaded the following morning. In the face of this merciless threat the Hong Merchants appealed to the humanity of the foreigners, and the latter "subscribed" 1,037 chests, which, though obviously a mere fraction of the total quantity in store, sufficed to postpone the execution.

It appears that Commissioner Lin now became sensible of the injustice of visiting upon the heads of the unfortunate Hong Merchants, his own countrymen, the consequences of lawlessness which they were powerless to prevent. Therefore he conceived the idea of getting into his power one of the leading British traders, Mr. Dent, representative of the great house of Dent and Company, which had a large interest in the opium trade.

There is an apparent anomaly in the fact that any British firm of high standing should be connected with a traffic so disreputable as opium smuggling. But little if any discredit attached

to opium smuggling at the time of these events. The average foreigner had no sympathy with Captain Elliot's views, nor imagined that when he ran a cargo of the drug he did anything to "stain the British character with deep disgrace." There was a sporting element about the business that greatly supplemented the sweetness of the gains derived from it. The ships carrying the opium might almost be called yachts. They were splendid little clippers, usually schooners from a hundred to two hundred tons burden, with exceptional sailing powers and heavily armed. The great value of their cargo gave them a special attraction in the eyes of pirates, and being themselves little better than pirates, they had to rely entirely on their own powers of defence, for the governments of Europe and America, though making no attempt to check the opium traffic, drew the line at exacting reparation for losses incurred by their subjects or citizens in pursuing it. It was also necessary that the opium clipper should be able to defy any forceful exercise of the Chinese laws against smuggling, and thus these vessels acquired a corsair-like character which threw a glamour over the evil they wrought. Among their owners were to be found men who in every relation of life scrupulously observed the highest canons of integrity, and this strange association of the "merchant prince" with the opium-smuggler helped materially to obscure the other-

wise unequivocal issues with which Commissioner Lin had to deal in 1839.

No attempt was made to seize the person of Mr. Dent: he received an invitation to meet the commissioner at the city gate. But when he refused to go without a written guarantee of safety, the invitation was changed to an order conveyed through two of the Hong Merchants who came with chains on their necks as an indication of the fate awaiting them if their errand failed.

At this stage Captain Elliot began to take an active part in the drama. He happened to be residing in Macao at the time, and having determined that duty called him to Canton, he prefaced his coming by a despatch to the governor expressing readiness to use "sincere efforts for fulfilling the pleasure of the great Emperor as soon as it was made known to him."

It is difficult to understand the sentiments animating Captain Elliot at this critical juncture. Almost simultaneously with the drafting of the above despatch, which clearly implied willingness to co-operate in putting down the opium traffic and even competence to control it, he issued two circulars, one ordering all British vessels — inclusive of smugglers — to proceed to Hongkong and prepare to resist acts of aggression; the other declaring that he withdrew all confidence in the "justice and moderation of the provincial Government," and that he advised

all his nationals to prepare for taking refuge on board ship. Undoubtedly Commissioner Lin did not show much moderation. He probably thought that the day for moderation had passed, nor is it conceivable that an European or American official, circumstanced as he was, would have acted differently. As for justice, however, the story of the complication does not indicate any monopoly of that quality on the foreign side.

Arrived at Canton, Captain Elliot took Mr. Dent openly under his protection, but at the same time offered to accompany him into the city, provided that the commissioner promised not to separate them. He entertained no doubt of Lin's good faith; and indeed it is worthy of note that throughout the long years of stormy intercourse here recorded not one instance of treacherous violence against foreign life stands to the discredit of Chinese officials.

The commissioner, interpreting Captain Elliot's arrival as preliminary to the withdrawal of the whole foreign community, doubled the guards and drew around the Factories a cordon of troops and cruisers, marshalled in menacing array. In the face of this demonstration the foreign merchants of all nationalities, with few exceptions, signed a document pledging themselves "not to deal in opium or to attempt to introduce it into the Chinese Empire." But Commissioner Lin wanted more. He wanted to have all the opium delivered over, and he wanted bonds placing the

lives and properties of future smugglers at the disposal of the Chinese authorities. To the former demand Captain Elliot acceded. He issued a circular calling upon the British merchants to "surrender for the service of Her Majesty's Government" all the opium in their possession, and he officially accepted "the most full and unreserved" responsibility on account of the property thus handed over. But neither he nor his nationals showed any disposition to entertain the proposal with regard to bonds.

The British superintendent's circular elicited a prompt reply. Before evening on the day of its issue vouchers for 20,283 chests of opium were handed to him. It has been suggested that the owners of the drug were glad to become creditors of the British Government for the price of an article to which the usual market was temporarily closed. They themselves claimed, however, that they acted under duress, and there can be no doubt that Captain Elliot's procedure was dictated by a conviction that the lives of his nationals were endangered.

A fresh complication now occurred. Captain Elliot expected that his promise to deliver the opium would be immediately followed by the withdrawal of the guards from the Factories and the restoration of normal conditions. But the opium being stored in twenty-two schooners which lay at a distance of forty miles down stream from Canton, Commissioner Lin refused

to raise the siege until the contraband article had actually passed into his hands, or at least until its receipt had become a practical certainty. That condition was not fulfilled until the forty-eighth day of the foreign merchants' confinement, and in consequence of the delay Captain Elliot described Lin's conduct as "false and perfidious." Before acknowledging the propriety of such epithets the Chinese commissioner's point of view must be considered. On the eve of repairing to Canton Captain Elliot had promised the Chinese authorities in writing that he would use "his sincere efforts to fulfil the pleasure of the great Emperor as soon as it was made known to him." Almost before the ink on that despatch was dry he had requisitioned an English man-of-war's protection for British life and property; had ordered all British ships, whether opium-smugglers or regular traders, to rendezvous at Hongkong and prepare to resist acts of aggression; had openly defied the attempts of the Chinese commissioner to get possession of the person of one of the most prominent among the opium-importers, and had shown, in short, that his promise to fulfil the great Emperor's pleasure must not be read too literally. Commissioner Lin was certainly not guilty of either falsehood or perfidy when he subsequently declined to take any of Captain Elliot's assurances on trust. Besides, the surrender of the opium did not satisfy all Lin's demands; he required

also bonds pledging their signatories never again to traffic in the drug under penalty of death. Doubtless having obtained the opium which represented an immediate sacrifice of large dimensions, he anticipated no serious difficulty about the bonds, and thought that they could be secured by exercising a little further pressure. Ultimately, however, he seems to have deemed it inexpedient to continue the confinement of the foreigners on that account, and the siege was raised independently of the bonds. But it appears hardly just to call him "false and perfidious" because, guided by the light of experience, he declined to attach any value to foreign promises pending their fulfilment.

Appendix

Appendix

NOTE 1. — A very different account has been given by some travellers, but it would appear that the prominence and frequency of burying-places in China have misled these observers into an exaggerated estimate of the space actually devoted to purposes of sepulture.

NOTE 2. — In Japan the extent of cultivated land does not exceed thirteen millions of acres, whereas the population is forty-two millions. Thus, even assuming that a moiety of the land produces two crops yearly — a liberal assumption — it would follow that the ratio is not more than one-half of an acre per head. Yet in Japan there are no evidences of the grinding poverty that force themselves upon the attention of every traveller in China.

NOTE 3. — Dr. Wells Williams thinks that the tendency to multiply is augmented by the custom of families remaining together through several generations for the sake of the social and local importance they acquire. Cases are on record of nine generations inhabiting one house, and of a family table at which seven hundred mouths were fed daily.

NOTE 4. — Not really "willow," but *Pterocarpa stenoptera*.

NOTE 5. — As an example of the roads within the province of Szchuan, the highway between Chunking and Chingtu (the capital of the province) may be instanced. This, the best, in fact the only dry, road in the province has a width of five feet and is paved with heavy stone slabs laid crosswise.

NOTE 6. — Similar divisions exist in Japan, namely, the *ken*, or prefecture; the *fu*, or urban prefecture, and the *do*, or circuit. But the *fu* does not include several *ken*, being in fact merely a metropolitan prefecture (Tōkyō, Kyōtō, or Ōsaka), neither does

the *do* enter into the present administrative scheme, being merely a geographical term, as Hokkai-do (northern-sea circuit), *Nakesan-do* (mid-mountain circuit), etc.

NOTE 7. — The distinction between the *chou* and the *hien* need not be considered by foreign students desiring to form only a general idea of the Chinese system. Some writers, however, call the *fu* a town of the first order, the *chou* a town of the second order, and the *hien* a town of the third order; though, in fact, the word "town" does not properly describe any of these divisions, since each comprises not only a town but also the district surrounding it.

NOTE 8. — The term "Mandarin," commonly applied by foreigners to Chinese officials, is derived from the Portuguese word *mandar*, "to command," and is quite unknown to the Chinese language.

NOTE 9. — "The Middle Kingdom."

NOTE 10. — The term "tael" is derived from the Hindu "tota" through the Malayan "tahil." It signifies an ounce weight of pure silver, and is not a coin.

NOTE 11. — In the neighbouring Empire of Japan, where only 13 millions of acres are under cultivation, the land tax yields 40 million *yen* in round figures. At the same rate — which, so far from being onerous, is admittedly very light — the sum collected in China would be 1,200 million *yen*, or about 1,000 million taels.

NOTE 12. — Much of the information here given is abbreviated from a brochure by Mr. Consul-General Jamieson.

NOTE 13. — Mr. H. A. Giles says that it is derived from *li*, the thousandth part of a tael, which is nominally one *cash*, and *kin* (metal, here used for money). He adds: "A tax, originally of one cash per tael on all sales, voluntarily imposed on themselves by the people, among whom it was at first very popular, with a view of making up the deficiency in the land tax of China, caused by the Taeping and Nienfei troubles.

NOTE 14. — The *Peking Gazette* of January 18th, 1875, said: "*Likin* is in its nature an oppressive institution, only continued in force owing to the necessity of providing resources to meet the army expenditures in the northwest."

NOTE 15. — Mr. A. Michie in "The Englishman in China."

NOTE 16. — As the loans were contracted in gold (with one exception) and are redeemable in gold, they are here stated in sterling.

NOTE 17. — *Hong* means a "row" or "series." It alludes to the fact that a Chinese warehouse consists of a succession of rooms. Hence, as the original foreign factories at Canton were built in that style, the Chinese gave to each block the name *hong*, which ultimately came to be applied to mercantile houses of every kind.

NOTE 18. — They were known in China as *T'iao-chin-chiao*, or the "sect of persons that extract the sinew."

NOTE 19. — This is another evidence of the fact that the Jews in Europe were driven to adopt the trade of money-lenders, not of deliberate choice, but because all other means of earning a livelihood were denied to them.

NOTE 20. — Literally, "knocking the head." The salute before the Throne required three kneelings and nine knockings of the head.

NOTE 21. — This old story makes a striking preface to the Berlin incident of 1901, when the Kaiser sought to insist that the Chinese Ambassador of apology should "kowtow" before him. The Chinaman declined.

NOTE 22. — "Different" or "strange" is the exact significance of this ideograph which has roused so much wrath and produced so much misunderstanding. It has scarcely a profounder meaning than the English word "foreign," and is certainly not more offensive than "alien."

NOTE 23. — A corruption of the Portuguese *boca tigre*, which is a translation of the Chinese name ("Tiger's Gate"). The same place is often spoken of as the "Bogue."

NOTE 24. — Sir John Davis, "The Chinese."